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Margaret Foster Herrick, 1892

In reverent tribute to her father

SAMUEL EDWARD HERRICK

For thirty-two years
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Margaret Herrick

from the doctor

of the writer, D.V.

4th March 1921.

88 BIS AND V.I.H.

LETTERS FROM TWO HOSPITALS

BY

AN AMERICAN V.A.D.

Katherine Foote
daughter of Arthur Foote

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I DEDICATE THESE LETTERS TO
MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,
TO WHOM THEY WERE WRITTEN

"And of these, many are gone, to join
a radiant band, whose hope is in us."

AU COUVENT DE L'ADORATION PERPETUELLE

LETTERS FROM TWO HOSPITALS

HÔTEL DE CRILLON, PARIS,
January 14, 1917.

HERE we are in a gray, rainy Paris. The train was an hour and a half late last night; we had missed the morning one on account of delay in the examination of our luggage at Havre, or we should have come with Mr. Simonds. The examination was not troublesome, but that was only because of Helen's papers being so good, and that we were travelling with Mr. Simonds. Travelling is every bit as difficult as people say, but one cannot expect it to be otherwise when one hears of the things that happen that should n't.

After writing you at Havre, I spent the beautiful sunny morning walking about the town. As I wrote to J——, his gold has been given to the big hospital which was made out of the Hôtel Frascati. It has, of course, wonderful exposure to sunlight and air, and seems splendidly run. The *médecin-chef* was sympathetic, and his wife too, who works there all the time. They seemed greatly touched at this gift from the distant J——, and interested to know about him, and if he had ever been in France.

I did n't stay long, as motors were arriving, large numbers of them, filled with poor, weary, suffering wounded. No amount of reading or imagination prepares one for the sight of wounded from the front. One cannot describe it; one must see it to feel it. Apart from the suffering, one's principal impression is that one has *never* seen so

much mud caked on to human beings! And then one marvels at their great, enduring patience. What blessed relief they must find in bathing and clean linen and beds!

The poor Hôtel Continental has had sad days since we knew it, but now enjoys a resurrected heyday of fame, as practically everyone who passes through Havre eats there, besides many British and French officers. After luncheon, we saw something of a family of refugees from Northern France who were striving, with many difficulties, to rejoin the head of the family. Also an English woman of some important medico-military position; fine and high bred, and speaking beautiful French. It rained all the afternoon, and she sat writing endless reports. She went back last night to England by the "Normannia," which brought us. Then there was a charming Belgian family, husband and wife and her mother. The husband, an engineer of some sort, beginning life again in Paris at forty.

We were alone in the carriage coming up on the *Rapide* until Rouen, where three Frenchmen got in. Rouen was crowded with soldiers coming and going from the front, Tommies handling huge trucks of supplies, officers, and groups of superb Colonial troops (Moroccans). We had brought a delicious luncheon from London; chicken, potted grouse, wonderful bread and butter, and other goodies, which we could n't finish. There were three Red Cross girls from Scotland off to Salonica in the next carriage; but they had enough, so we could n't turn it over to them. Helen wanted to give it to the soldiers on the platform, but there was n't time enough to get out. Then a young Corporal passed, and we called him to our window and explained. He was just going back to the front, and took it eagerly. I said to him, that he would know where to place it if it did n't interest him (he was

so much of an equal, as it turned out, that we felt in some doubt as to his wanting it). "*Mais non, Mademoiselle, pas du tout, ce sera pour moi! Je vous remercie, Mademoiselle,* I thank you very much." Then the train pulled out and we called, "*Bonne chance*"; the last we saw of him he was standing at attention and saluting us. Helen and I were very silent for the rest of the ride, for we were both thinking of the nice, well-bred, fresh-faced boy, and of what the end would most likely be, *must* be, for the greater proportion of infantry and artillery.

Mr. Simonds met us, and we drove here through streets as dark and as quiet as London; the utter lack of life at night is so strange. Yet nothing seems strange to us now in one way; the war seems to have gotten into us as it has into everyone else, and become a normal state of life. One accepts it, one works, one takes all the pleasure that comes, and one hopes. There is nothing else one can do. . . . This morning I delivered the Clément package, and those for the Embassy. Mr. Simonds leaves on Monday for the French front, and we hope to get off Tuesday. I want to see about giving Leslie's money for the wooden leg first.

HÔPITAL BÉNÉVOLE 88 BIS,
9ième CORPS D'ARMÉE, TOURS,
January 17.

Here we are at the end of our journey, and the end of our first day's routine. We came down comfortably from Paris yesterday by the 8.40 Bordeaux express. We made only two stops; at each quantities of *poilus* and at Les Aubray we passed a long, long train going to the front; all new troops we knew, because the carriages were decorated with flowers and green. At St.-Pierre-des-Corps we changed for Tours, a five minute ride. St.

Pierre used to be a large garrison town, with infantry and cavalry regiments. Now the garrison is smaller, but there is a large camp for new Belgian troops in training, and many munition factories which employ a great many women and refugees. Coming into Tours we saw a large detachment of Boche prisoners, for there is also a large prison camp here. As in Paris, the streets are full of soldiers, convalescents, disabled, and blinded, and while one does not feel the war as keenly as in Paris, where it is dominant, still there is no getting away from it.

I wish I could give you some impression of Tours, of the curious feeling one has of living back in the Middle Ages; of its quaint streets and of the wonderful beauty of some of the houses. If you have a chance, find some book about Tours, so that you may know it a little along with me. There are endless revelations; of beautiful little gardens, of silent green places, of wonderful gateways, mysterious windows, marvellously lovely carvings, — but I must get on with the real story!

We found the Red Cross flag with the French flag at 3 rue Descartes, and *Madame La Supérieure* and all the nuns waiting for us. Helen was so happy, and they were so happy; it was very sweet. Meanwhile I was looking with all my eyes at the most wonderful place I have ever lived in. Parallel to rue Descartes, beyond a little courtyard, is an exquisite sixteenth-century cloister, bordering the large courtyard of the Convent, with its statue and shrine and trees, and clear pebbly pavement. To the left from the cloister one looks across into the kitchen; the door is always open, and it's like a Dutch picture: the white-capped lay sisters moving about, the big oven, the shining brasses, and the steam rising from the huge open boilers, where *every bit* of water is heated.

There is a still older part of the Convent: we passed

through it, out through another court, in again, upstairs through rooms and passages, over a little balcony which overlooks still another court, into our little room. We are very comfy; a nice fireplace; a bureau; a huge *armoire à glace*, and off the room a little dressing-room, and a funny closet which runs under the eaves and takes care of trunks, shoes, and such like. . . . The food is good, well-cooked, and sufficient, if not varied. So far Tours has not had to be careful about sugar, but butter is scarce and dear, so we only have a little at breakfast. We sit at table with several refugee ladies, and nothing but war, memories of the invasion, and individual experiences of the time, ever comes up. One woman has a brother fighting in the artillery at Salonica; another a brother in the same place in the Engineers; a very pretty woman has lost her husband. Yet their courage and manner and gayety never fail. It is only when they are silent that shadows come into their eyes, and one reads then of things seen, and heard, and thought, that are full of terror and sorrow and suffering. The first time I saw that look was in the face of an officer at the Burlington. I have seen it often since — it's very dreadful.

January 18.

The nuns are all sweet. Sœur Aline is in charge of the Hospital, and Sœur Donatienne (*infirmière breveté*) is at the head of the nursing force. The nuns show a very intelligent grasp of the war, and one is always glad to talk with them; they are so kind and wise and brave. There are twenty-two patients, convalescent officers; two wards and two private rooms. *Salle* 1, my ward, is on the street, with three big windows, through which the sun pours in by midday. Work begins at eight, when I carry over from the kitchen the tray of coffee, chocolate, bread and toast for my patients' breakfast. Then I open

the huge shutters, wake the patients (not always easy, that), and set the table for breakfast. Later comes bed-making, and general care of the ward. Besides this work, I take care of the officers' dining-room, and of the *Salle de Pansements*, and with Helen help in the care of the officers' table. I clean all the steel knives, forty-four of them, twice a day. Then I sew; just now I am covering a cushion for a convalescent, a man four times buried by shell fire, and in bad shape from shell shock. He is in one of the private rooms.

I wish you could see the *permis de séjour* that Helen and I each have to sport here! "*Mlle. F. est autorisée à résider durant la guerre à Tours.*" After a few instructions comes the following: "*Elle est prévenue qu'en cas d'infraction aux préscriptions précédentes, elle sera immédiatement arrêtée sous prévention d'espionage.*"

January 20.

Yesterday afternoon Helen and I went to a military hospital for the blinded, where we heard helpers were needed. It's called La Torterue, after the owner of the house, a fine big one, with a lovely garden. The government took it over early in the war: it's the saddest place in the world. Nothing but blinded soldiers (though not all are permanently so), many are wounded besides, and conditions of life around them are not inspiring. We cut out eye-dressings most of the afternoon, and had with us a big black Senegalese; sweet and gentle and resigned, but, oh, so tired of it all. There is something infinitely touching in these colored troops, for the cause of the war must seem remote to them, and yet they are so proud of being "*Français et s'être battu pour le pays!*"

This morning we went to 7.45 mass before going on duty, *la messe des aveugles*. Some of them sing upstairs

in the balcony, and they almost fill the chapel. Besides, there's just a sprinkling of women in mourning, and the nuns. There is always a nun in adoration before the Sacrament, and she wears a scarlet veil. On Sunday there are two. Helen and I are two of three Americans in this biggish city, and it seemed strange and yet natural to be kneeling there. The service was beautiful but when one saw those brave souls come hesitatingly in, most of them so young, it was almost too much to bear. Indeed, if one did not have plenty of work to do, the contemplation of such suffering and the problems which the nations must deal with after the war would drive one mad. . . . It was very merry in my ward this morning. Much English was attempted, — always a sign of good spirits. Lieut. Bourseul has a nice tenor, and sings delightfully from the moment he wakes up. Lieut. Coupier, in the *Génie*, a tall, dark chap, is always the last man up. He says one does not get the good of being in bed while one sleeps, so he stays late on purpose. "*C'est qu'il est logique, ce garçon*," says Berthet, a fine looking man, also in the *Génie*. Well, the resting is not long for most of them now.

A lot of *évacués* from the Ardennes arrived in town Thursday. The Germans allowed only one from each family to leave. Those *devils* are using all the good flour and make the people subsist on the spoiled stuff.

Did I tell you that before leaving Paris I found just the right man for Leslie's wooden-leg money? Yesterday I left some of Mr. Winslow's money at La Torterue for additional food and sweets. The government does adequately, but these men are young, and in a position to get great benefit from extra nourishment, especially sugar, butter, and eggs, when they are obtainable.

The nuns are wonderfully efficient: with no conven-

iences everything is beautifully kept, and they never tire of drudgery. They do our washing exquisitely, but we have as little as possible, for everyone is so busy. The arrears of mending here, as all over France, are appalling. Everything is wearing out, — uniforms, clothes, stockings, sheets, and nothing can keep up with the demands on people's time. Mending is doubly hard when one has so little to mend with.

January 24.

Mamma's cable came this morning, just after half-past eight. I was so happy to start the day with it, and am glad my scribblings have begun to arrive. . . . Yesterday and to-day have been cold and bright like our weather, but sometimes skies are gray and the air is a damp cold. Many of the nuns have terrible colds, and it's especially hard on the lay nuns, who have such an interminable round of heavy work to do. There are forty-four nuns altogether in the Convent; they are the most absolutely happy and cheerful women one can imagine; not unfeeling either, for the sorrows of their nation oppress them greatly. To-day we are unhappy at the thought of what this cold must mean to prisoners, to the people in the invaded provinces, and to the poor everywhere. It is bad enough in the trenches, but worse for the others. What an irony of fate that, when coal is so scarce, the winter should be unusually severe! Snow in London, at Marseilles, at Toulouse, on the Riviera, and in the North misery and suffering untold. We have with us at table just now a Sergeant-Major who is just out of the eye hospital after a successful operation. Before that he was a prisoner twenty-two months in Westphalia, and endured a life of hell surpassed only by that of British prisoners. Now he is here, but has had no word of his family, who

are in the invaded provinces. Mlle. Irma Providence, the *infirmière* with whom I work, lived through the bombardment of Arras for many days, and took care of sick and civilian wounded, until the end of food was in sight. Then with three hundred others she walked by night eighteen kilometres through wind and rain to the nearest station from which a train could be sent. She has endured all of this, and has no possessions, but she considers herself fortunate, since neither she nor her sister were wounded, and they were even able to save another sister's three little children. The heroism of these people is simply beyond words, and makes some of the problems with which France is grappling (I will not go into them now) all the more hideous.

Yesterday I had a great sensation as we were going into La Torterue. I passed a Boche prisoner there for treatment. I can't describe to you all the sensations that rushed through my mind as that familiar and once-loved uniform brushed me so closely. We found our poor Senegalese very unhappy. The others had teased him about his religion (he is very devout), and finally locked him out in the cold for fun. We had some music at the end of the afternoon; it's not much of a piano, but that did n't seem to matter, and they all loved singing "Madelon" and "Sambre et Meuse."

Wilson's last pipe-dream exasperates Helen and me. Why does n't he come over and see what he is talking about? He writes as if we were still dealing with the world as it was before the war. We are not — it 's *gone, over*, and before the United States tries to make any further progress, that fact must be registered once for all. We find here a very appreciative, sympathetic and intelligent interest as regards the situation at home. They are tolerant and anxious to make every allowance for the

difficulty of our position. It is felt, however, that Wilson must be under German influence; House is suggested, and there is even a *canard* that the present Mrs. Wilson is a Boche! . . .

Ask Lebon to tell me where he lived here, so I may go and say Howdy to his house. This is surely a town of incomparable beauty, and I suppose altogether it's the most wonderful place historically I've ever seen. You know it's one of the first Roman settlements in Gaul, and there are still traces of the wall. The Cathedral is beautiful, and all the quarter about it. There is a marvelous old cedar tree in the garden of the Musée near the Cathedral; Lebon is sure to remember it.

General LaCotte, who is on the staff here, came to the Convent to-day. He asked to have us presented when he heard that we were Americans, "*Se dévouant pour la France.*" He said, "*Je vous félicite, et au nom de la France, je vous remercie.*" Note that the felicitations came first! The General was a bit of all right.

January 31.

It is only two weeks to-day since we went to work, yet I have grave doubts whether I have ever lived any other way; so quickly have we become a part of our picturesque clerico-military environment. . . . This afternoon we have been to Les Tilleuls; the walk was lovely, bright sunshine, and the streets at their most enchanting. We met funny yellow trolleys, with women conductors, wearing a becoming sort of Scotch cap; and tiny carts, drawn by shaggy ponies and good-humored donkeys. We saw one of the smallest donkeys imaginable, drawing a cart filled with long loaves of war bread, and driven by a rosy-cheeked boy in a blue blouse. Lots of Serbian refugees were out (they live in cantonments by the

Loire, and many work in munitions), Moroccan convalescents, and many, many legless and armless and blinded soldiers, — but everyone was happy. Crossing the Loire, we looked with interest at the slowly flowing river filled with thick cakes of ice, almost round in shape. The river has not been frozen for forty years, and people come from miles away to see it. The view of Tours from Les Tilleuls was lovely, particularly when we were leaving at sunset. We found Mme. Sourdillon an admirable and charming woman. She has two sons at the front, one in artillery and one in aviation. We met her young and beautiful daughter, who is very high-brow (mathematics) without seeming so. There was also a lady there whose husband, an infantry officer, is at present on staff duty, but longs to rejoin his regiment. There was a delicious tea, but we partook sparingly, as befits war parties. Mme. Sourdillon still has a small normal school, but has turned her big school building into a hospital of one hundred and fifty beds. She has mostly convalescents, and many shell-shock patients who have partly lost their memories, and who are learning to walk, talk, speak, and live again. Mrs. Bob Bliss and a few other Americans gave the hospital its start, and it's now affiliated with *L'Union des Femmes de France*, and acts as an auxiliary to Descartes, the big military hospital here. Mme. Sourdillon needed money for shoes badly, so we each left a hundred francs (mine was from Edith).

Helen's trunk came last night, so in the evening she was occupied in sorting and planning. She means to send a lot of stuff to Pont-Aven in Brittany. It was lucky she was busy, for I was up late, sewing endless buttons on khaki flannel shirts, and doing all sorts of military mending.

We are having very exciting days just now, as the

Supérieur Général of the Order, Père Silvain, has just arrived here on a tour of inspection of all the houses. The *Mère Supérieure Générale* is at the Mother House in Paris, but Père Silvain is at Courtrai in Belgium, and is only out on parole. The King of Spain was instrumental in making the journey possible, for there is a house of the Order in Spain. (Also many in South America, and some in the United States.) Of course the Convent is all aflutter at our distinguished guest. When we came back from La Torterue yesterday afternoon, we could n't imagine what had happened, for all the lay nuns were in their white habits, and yet it was not Sunday, the day they usually blossom forth from their black aprons, which cover all the glory of the white. Presently the mystery was solved, when Sœur Mastidia came in to tell us the news. All the evening the big court was alive with figures scurrying about, each carrying a wondrous old-fashioned but very efficacious lantern, and the little new moon and our same dear winter stars over all. It was a scene never to be forgotten; but then every minute of our every day is a picture here, and I'm never so busy that the pictures don't sink into my brain to be remembered and told and recounted over with you later.

Sunday.

Yesterday was one hectic day: the excitement of *Père Supérieur* still held, and endless matters came up to be attended to. However, by three we were established at La Torterue; Helen had taken over all the flannel which came in her trunk, and with Mme. Pierracini and Mme. Batard, we cut, basted, and got partly stitched sixteen shirts which the hospital needed badly. We were too busy to suit Doyé, our Senegalese, and besides, we had other company, which vexed him, for he likes to be the

only one: Pierre, a man who has lost both eyes and both hands, and René, a most charming little person, who calls himself Pierre's *ordonnance;* he is devoted to him, and is indeed a good genius for the whole ward. It was the day for the distribution of new clothes, and René had drawn a *képi* much too large for him; he consulted with me about cutting it over, was quite sure he could do it, and did do it most handily and successfully. "*C'est épatant,*" he said, and was as pleased as a child. Pierre had just received a splendid letter from the son of his Colonel; the son is also wounded, and is a contemporary and neighbor of Pierre's. It was a superb letter in feeling and expression, but the reason I speak of it is not because of that, but because it echoes what we hear on every side, no hope of peace, and a long pull to come.

We got home about five; Helen was to have her interview with *Révérend Père*, and then I. He is a fine simple man, about sixty-six years old, and comes from the Midi. He has been through a great deal; I shall remember it all to tell you. I don't know how he will get into Belgium again, but if he does, he says we must come there and work with him. He gave me his blessing before I left him, but we were to meet again. Sœur Aline and I were taking off the bedspreads in *Salle* 1 when he came in with all the officers, to speak to them a little. It was a picturesque sight, — the long panelled room, dimly lighted, the rows of beds on either side, at one end the French and Allied colors and a Red Cross flag, and under them, the *Révérend Père*, surrounded by a group of brilliantly uniformed, in many cases stunning-looking, men.

Sœur Cléonide, the oldest, and a very suffering sister, died last night; Sœur Marie-Ange, who is the portress at the back door, told me this morning that she read a little English, so I have given *her* Madame Cotter's card. She is delighted.

This morning, at *la messe des aveugles*, our *aumonier militaire volontier* said mass. He has been at the front since the beginning, is now tired out, has a bad heart and has come here for rest. There are many priests like him with the army. He wears a regular soutane, only it is short, and his leather leggings look oddly under his beautiful silk and lace vestments. The news of the attack on Verdun yesterday was very exciting, and bears out the rumors of an early start. I hope it will not be too hard for me to get away to work in England for April and part of May, on my way home. I am devoted to my children, *Messieurs les officiers and poilus* alike, only my heart is true to England and Tommy, and I should like to do a bit over there before going home.

Our patients are all getting on, but complete recovery is slow. Lieut. Raffy in my ward has just sent in an application for duty in Salonica. He had a bullet in his knee, and will never have free use of it again, but he can be very useful in staff work and so on. He's a nice fellow, *très sérieux*, a student, and a great rider and swimmer. Another of my men, only twenty-one, having already lived through five days of the inferno of Verdun, hopes shortly to go back to the Western front; he has a father serving, and a brother of nineteen has just enlisted in the navy. Lt. Bourseul was singing "Le Rêve" from "Manon" this morning. What memories it awoke! He has never studied, but his voice has a charming quality and is perfectly placed. It seems to me that as a race the French have a great talent for singing. We have all ages and types in the ward, but every man really loves music and sings more or less well. I hear an aeroplane whirring overhead as I write; there is an aviation school not far away.

February 2.

So much happens here, and yet it's all so tiny! Just now there is great excitement at La Torterue, for Secch, the other Senegalese, minus one arm and one eye, has been appointed *infirmier* and is tickled to pieces. He is so different from Doyé, who is moody, though always gentle. Secch is full of dash, rather a "case," in fact, but always biddable at heart. There's one *poilu* over there who seems to have been cast for hard lines in life. Before the war he was a coal-miner, like all his people before him. He has been wounded three times before this last time, an explosion in an ammunition wagon of which he was in charge. Now he can distinguish light, and there's some hope that he will regain more sight. However, he is cheerful, and remains quite normal, always acknowledging it might have been worse. Little René has been home *en permission;* he learned there definitely that his father had been killed on the Somme. René is the eldest, and much needed at home, but he must return into *La Fournaise*, as his sight is almost completely restored.

Yesterday we had a beautiful afternoon. It was cold, but bright, and after our work was done, we took the tram on the Rue Nationale; it was rather fun waiting for it; the whole town was out, being Sunday afternoon, and we saw all kinds and classes. Among other things that were interesting, we met a lot of Moroccans wearing the fez and cord, which shows they have made a pilgrimage to Mecca. And great quantities of dogs, both workers and *flâneurs*, were out. Animals seem happy in Touraine; certainly horses, ponies and donkeys are better treated than in Paris. Our tram came presently, and we ran out through St. Symphorien to Ste. Radegonde; Vouvray lies beyond. The road runs right along the Loire, the land rising steeply on one side, and there are innumerable little and

big villas, *Les Mimosas*, *Aux Lilas Blancs*, *Mon Repos*. Then on the other side, between the road and the river, are fields; a small golf club and course, covered a number; but the fair greens at this season seem given up to an erratic game of football. Part of the river was frozen solidly, and many people were solemnly walking across, to be able to say they had done it. We found Madame Dreux, the mother of Helen's godson, awaiting us at Ste. Radegonde. We walked up with her past enchanting little shops and discreetly hidden villas, and a hill on which stood a lovely old ruined church; up, up the narrow little road with ivy-hung walls on either side, until we came, after half a mile or so, into open country, — rather like our part of New Hampshire in character, only less wooded and more built up. The planting was vineyards (how long since I have seen any) and winter wheat. As we walked, aeroplanes in numbers buzzed overhead, for the aviation school was very near. From the plateau upon which Les Chaussons lies, we had a wonderful view of our own city. The cathedral towers and our three towers never looked lovelier than yesterday in the clear frosty light. Just as we turned in at the gate of Les Chaussons, we saw a *poilu* approaching; it turned out to be Helen's godson, back for an unexpected and final *permission* before leaving for the front. He is such a nice boy, full of confidence and enthusiasm. We spent a delightful hour with the Dreux and Madame Coudray, Madame Dreux's mother (Les Chaussons is the Coudray homestead), and a delightful old gentleman, who was spending the afternoon with them. We listened to letters from another son who is in Salonica, and saw all the animals; Papa, a cat; Milor, a bulldog; Tango, a fox-terrier; Bichette, a Percheron mare; a goat, and many rabbits (these last for eating). The friend, too, had a dear little dog, sixteen years old, very wise, whom he called Montagne.

Then Helen and I walked back to the tram, and so home to find the great news of the *Rupture*. It *is* great news; you can't imagine *how* great unless you live here, and realize how long and how patiently the Allies have been waiting for us to take notice. I hope it is not going to be an anxious and difficult time for you both; on that account I should love dearly to be at home. . . . Of course everyone here is tremendously excited by the news, and our little world particularly so, and there's no end of rejoicing and congratulations in our ward. The shell-shock victim, Captain Billion-Bourbon, is simply beside himself. He's Helen's patient; a great sufferer, but he retains his charming and cultivated personality. There are to be American flags added to the colors of the Allies in each ward.

The coal situation is terrible everywhere. Here one sees daily pitiful lines of people with bags and baskets, waiting for the coal to be given out; alas, that many must be disappointed every day. There is plenty of coal, but it can't be moved by water, owing to the frozen waterways. Meanwhile, hotels in Paris and other cities are having a dreadful time, for they must give up their furnaces and often have no other provision for heating. This is the case, too, with many of the modern apartment houses.

We have lost another nun, Sœur Marie de la Croix, a brilliant and delightful woman, though very old. She suffered greatly, but retained completely her grasp on affairs. I spent an hour with her last week, and we had a very interesting talk. Mlle. Irma is ill in bed but her sister is back from her leave, and she and I get on well with the work. I wish you knew my patients, for they are such dears. Sometime I'll tell you all about them. We have added a little English instruction to the breakfast hour, and I take the Illustrated London News for

myself and them and the other ward; they all enjoy it immensely, and eventually it goes to the front. There is to be an entertainment at La Torterue shortly; I am to sing, and there will be choruses by the *poilus*, and all sorts of things. You see there are many sides to life here!

Last night one of the German prisoners at the Camp killed himself; in his pocket was found a letter from a friend at home, saying that the prisoner's wife and children were dead, practically from starvation. . . .

February 3.

Such an early breakfast as we had yesterday morning, for all our patients went to Descartes for their treatments *de très bonne heure*, so that they might be back in time to go to Sœur Marie de la Croix's funeral. Mlle. Mélanie and I had the beds made by nine; I persuaded her then to leave me all the dusting so she should not be late for the service. To my surprise, I got to the Chapel in time to give a helping hand to our two orderlies and two of the nuns who were carrying in the coffin. The bearers had never shown up, so these four, after waiting a while, had carried Sœur Marie the long distance from her room; down steep steps, across the big courtyard, in and out of doors and passages, and across the smaller court. The service was impressive and our *aumonier militaire* said mass beautifully, but there is nothing so comforting as our Anglican service. The *Communauté*, our patients, and a few people from outside, made up the congregation. Mlle. Mélanie and I thought *Salle* 1 looked especially well! Four of our patients wear the *Croix de Guerre*, and one the *Légion d'Honneur* besides. The service was long, and I had to leave before the end to set the table for *le déjeuner de messieurs les officiers*.

In the afternoon, a charming friend of Helen's came

to see her, Madame de la Rive, who has a beautiful place near St. Avertin. Before the war, she had a sort of school where English boys came to learn French; so many, *many* of her former pupils have been killed!

February 10.

This morning came a fine postcard from Dangés. He has been promoted, and is now *maréchal de logis*. I have had a nice letter from Madame Dangés too; she is working at Lyons as devotedly as ever. Before going to La Torterue this afternoon I sent off a hundred francs of Edith's money to a French hospital in Haute Garonne, which is run by a British Unit organized by Mrs. Leith-Ross, Admiral Grinnell's niece. Miss Aked, with whom I crossed from Southampton, is in charge of another hospital in this same group. She has tubercular wounded and ill; few recover, and there is terrible suffering before the end. Her hospital is in great need of everything, and I gave her one of Francie's hypodermic outfits; she wrote last week that she uses it with such gratitude. We have had a busy afternoon at La Torterue. It was clean clothes day, and before beginning *that* drill there was a good bit to do in the operating-room, for the last operation had not begun until one, and things were behindhand in consequence. Madame Pierracini gave me the clean clothes for the Boches to-day; they are in a room by themselves, and have a French sergeant to guard them, though they show no desire to escape. Three of them were huddled around the fire when I went in, while the fourth was staring out of the window with such a forlorn expression. I expect they know the truth now, and it can't be pleasant. It was strange to hear again such words as *Guten Abend, gnädiges Fräulein, adieu, Fräulein* under these circumstances. After finishing there, I

went up with Helen to a gloomy attic, barely lighted by three small windows, and smoky from a stove which does n't heat. The attic is called *le village noir*, because seven Moroccans exist there, and only one *poilu*. To-day two of the former were in bed, one with a high temperature, pains in his chest, and a racking cough. We got him a drink and gave him some of our aspirin. The other was recovering from an op. and wanted *something* badly. He spoke no French, but one of his pals told us he longed for tea, which we eventually got him. Meanwhile the others sat stolidly about, smoking and playing cards, while the *poilu* busied himself weaving a big mat. When all the clean clothes were given out, Helen and I settled ourselves downstairs in the room with the piano. The rest of the afternoon passed in pulling threads in gauze, preparatory to cutting out dressings, while Helen and the other ladies worked on the flannel shirts. At odd times various poilus wandered in to try over their songs and the choruses for the concert Wednesday, while all the time Pierre and René talked quietly, Secch bounced in and out, and Doyé moped on the sofa.

The cold continues. Lyons is knee-deep in snow, and all communications are upset. In Paris the other day two women threw themselves in front of a coal truck, and while the driver's attention was distracted by them, others emptied the truck of its coal. We are fortunate in the Convent, because we have plenty of wood to carry us through the winter.

Captain Bonnet, our ranking officer, left yesterday to finish his convalescence. He has practically recovered from his last wound, a severe abdominal one. First wounded in September, 1914, in the throat, he spent eight days in the hospital, and twenty convalescing, and then insisted on rejoining his regiment at the front. He

wears both the *Croix de Guerre* and the *Légion d'Honneur*, and is a fine fellow in every way. We shall miss him. It's so sickening, patching up people to go back to the horror of the front.

February 12.

Helen and I had tea yesterday with Captain Billion-Bourbon and his wife, who has come on from Poitiers for a few days. Lt. Hardouin, who shares Captain Billion-Bourbon's room was there too, — a nice fellow; his four brothers are fighting, and his two sisters nursing. It was a wonderful party. Helen contributed a delicious American fruit cake, and there was an English plum cake, and *pâtisseries*, which can still be bought two days in the week. We drank our toast to the Allies in *Vin fin de Xeres!* Captain Billion-Bourbon quoted Washington, of whom he is a great admirer, and talked so interestingly. He has a splendid mind; what a sacrifice and loss such a man is to his country.

We had a long afternoon at La Torterue Saturday; in the course of our varied labors we came across some tin boxes marked *comité de Boston*, and found that for a long time the *comité* has supplied La Torterue with all its best dressings and gauze; they also sent some sheets, which are still called *les Américains*. Even the empty boxes are treasured, and made to serve in all sorts of ways. The discovery gave one a pleasant feeling. Doyé was terribly blue. "*Trois mois et un jour, et ne vois pas mieux. Pas bon, pas bon.*" Poor child; he cried most of the afternoon. One of the Anamites, who has a terrible eye, tried to entertain Doyé by making a mouse out of his handkerchief and having it run up and down his arm and jump all over the room, but even this failed to cheer him. Secch is so different, full of larks, thinking about his *Croix de*

Guerre, which he has earned but not yet received, and being altogether cold comfort to poor Doyé.

This morning Lt. Bourseul, who is getting his papers in order, as he expects to leave us shortly, showed us the radiographs and history of his wound. Some story! The wound which has kept him here so long was a bad compound fracture of the femur. It has been a hard pull and taken two operations to get the leg into shape at all, and it's shorter now than the other one. He *could* apply for a soft job; instead, he has asked for duty in aviation, since he is no longer fit for infantry. As he was originally in the Mounted *Chasseurs*, and was transferred to infantry at his own request when the losses grew so heavy, his present choice is not surprising. He is such a charming person, — we shall miss him so much.

February 16.

To-day has been heavenly, very clear, and good flying weather. Ever so many *oiseaux de France* were out, and it was wonderful to see them flash and gleam in the golden air, as they circled and did stunts high up over our old wonder city. Helen and I walked to Les Tilleuls for tea, and saw there three of Mlle. Edith's shell-shock pupils, whom she is teaching to talk again. Mme. Sourdillon took us over the hospital and we saw much that was interesting. Her cook is a refugee, whose husband and two sons are at the front. She read us a letter which had just gotten through from her village, where her father and mother are; a terrible letter, just a bald summary of death and desolation. The boys of fifteen and sixteen are hiding in the woods like ravenous hunted wild beasts, to escape fighting or working for the Boche. Tears of anguish poured down the poor soul's face as she talked. Little as she earns, she still manages to help others by

sending food parcels to prisoners of war. I stayed behind a minute, and gave her a little money, out of Mrs. Merrill's contribution; I was so glad that I had brought some. Mons. Sourdillon appeared for tea, a delightful man, of great cultivation. Mlle. Edith and Mons. André, who was home on short leave, were there too, and the talk was immensely interesting. . . . It was lovely coming home; dusk just setting in over our enchanted valley, and little friendly lights beginning to twinkle as we walked along by the river, — an unforgettable hour of peace and beauty, when horror and sorrow seemed remote. Yet every hour brings new horror and fresh sorrows. We have had our share of the latter lately here. Our gallant young *Chasseur* has just lost his only brother, and it is a terrible grief to him, his first. The brother took cold after a long march; Lt. Poirier went to Brest in response to the telegram which told him of his brother's illness, but he got there too late. The other men are so wonderful about helping him bear his great sorrow.

Helen has heard from Mr. Simonds that he is sailing for home soon. We gather he has had a satisfactory and encouraging trip. This is one of the days when I feel profoundly discouraged. Not about the outcome of the war, for there is no doubt about that — but about the endless problems and their appalling bigness; the war has created so many, and they increase every day it lasts. One often feels as though one should never have another thought of anything except to try and make some of these shattered lives happier and better. Helen is accomplishing so much with her enterprise and resources, and I am continually grateful for the money which I hold in trust, for all the dear people who gave to me. It means so much here, more than they can possibly imagine.

February 21.

Last night while Helen and I were at supper, Sœur Geraldine mysteriously handed us an envelope, whispering, "*C'était d'un militaire!*" This was the enclosure: "*Le médecin-chef du Service Centrale d'Ophthalmologie de la 9ième Région présente ses respectueux hommages à Miss Helène et Miss Catherine et les prie de vouloir bien lui faire le plaisir de venir à la petite réception toute intime qui suivra la remise de sa décoration, demain, mercredi vers 3res ½ de l'après-midi à l'hôpital.*" So this afternoon saw us at the *Remise de Décoration*. The sun came out for an hour or two, and as we walked down the Boulevard Béranger, the world seemed one huge spring; children were playing, couples were loitering, and old people were sunning themselves. It was the day of the Flower Market, and Helen and I bought some violets and white stocks from a nice old Lady, whose splendid dog was named Ami. Just as we got to the *Place de la Gare*, the General and his staff marched on. The *Place* is flanked on one end by the station, and at the other by the lovely garden of the *Préfecture*. On the station end cuirassiers and dragoons were drawn up, and on the two sides companies of the 66th Infantry and another regiment (class of 1917), while towards the *Préfecture* stood the men to be decorated. They were in two rows, facing the station, and behind them a third row; these were civilians in deep mourning, parents and relatives who were to receive the decorations of the fallen ones. Dr. Térrien was the third man decorated, and made a fine military appearance. François, from La Torterue (the miner) was also decorated; he received the *Croix de Guerre* and the *Médaille Militaire*. It was all very impressive, — General Poline's readings of the *citations* in his big round voice, the precision of his movements as he decorated the men, and the

feeling of the whole thing. Then came the inspection of the troops, while the *Cuirassiers'* trumpeters played the *fanfare* for inspection, and one felt the lump in one's throat coming. But when the ceremony was over, and the troops marched by to the music of the *Cuirassiers'* marching tune, and the flag passed, and the poor little child-like soldiers of the class of 1917 moved so bravely by, the lump was there, and the tears, too.

The *réception toute intime* was delightful. Generals and staff were there, and Dr. Térrien and the other doctors, and the wives, and there was a delicious tea, and *Vouvray Mousseux!* As we were leaving to go back to work, we met René, who had taken Pierre to the *Remise de Décoration*. They had François with them; he and Pierre had been at some pains to *arroser leur décorations*, and felt very happy. It's both pitiful and wonderful to think that they can still find life here exciting in spite of their disabilities, and it's amusing to think of little René's steering these two blind ones through the devious ways of Tours and her *buvettes!* We celebrated *Mardi Gras* for La Torterue by giving every one chocolate, — some hit!

February 24.

This afternoon we have been doing errands on the rue Nationale, and such life as there was! Cavalry recruits were coming in from the country in charge of a snappy young officer, merry shaggy ponies and adorable infinitesimal donkeys passed drawing picturesque carts, and sometimes dogs, in pairs or singly, helping to do the same. And soldiers, soldiers everywhere, — sick and well, — some bent over double from their wounds, just beginning to live again, some coming back for a short *permission*, others marching to the station in little groups, laden with

well-filled *musettes*, tin helmets, and entrenching tools; they rather remind one of the Knight in "Alice in Wonderland," and all "his own inventions." The big, gray official limousine, with the headquarters' insignia on the door, passed and re-passed, and ambulances and two-wheeled supply carts from the *Cuirassiers'* Depot, added to the excitement. We walked to the Cher before we came home; the sweet country and quiet river and soft air were very spring-like. A troop of dragoons passed us on the bridge; good horses and good riders.

February 27.

Sunday was lovely, and began happily, for it was my turn to go to *la messe des aveugles*. It's a joy singing with the men; they love it so, and we sing some beautiful *cantiques de guerre*. I have copied one for you. One of the singers is Fernand Deloison, a sweet, gentle lad, who comes from Cambrai. His sight was injured by a premature explosion, but it's improving, and he will soon return to aviation. He has asked me to make him a bag for *ses petits effets*. "*Un pauvre poilu a bien de la peine de rien garder pour lui, Mademoiselle.*" He wants me to make one for his chum, too, Clovis Godin, a melancholy *Cuirassier*, who comes from Roubaix. This town is in the hands of the Germans, so he has heard nothing from his father and mother and three pretty sisters since the war began. He has four brothers fighting, besides, so it's small wonder he's oppressed. Was n't it nice of Fernand to ask for Clovis as well as himself? They both want me to be their *Marraine;* my family is growing!

Thursday afternoon we met a big gang of Boche prisoners, employed on railroad work here. It was the first time we had seen so many together, and the different types were striking. They looked well-fed, and many

seemed happy, though some looked profoundly sad. Most of them were young. It was curious to hear the familiar tongue as they joked among themselves. The day was beautiful, soft and balmy, — a day which spoke of hope and joy, seeming to triumph over the sorrowful sights, the crowd of poor brave souls, some with remade faces, some legless, some armless, others blind, — the huge army of living martyrs to the cause which, thank God, we have made our own at last. What were their thoughts as prisoners and convalescents passed each other?

We've just said good-bye to Lt. Raffy. His application for duty in Salonica was accepted, and he leaves to-night on furlough before sailing. George Hollister is still out there, but he wrote me that he expected to come back in April. I have given Lt. Raffy a letter to him, just in case they happen to be near each other. George wrote such a splendid letter!

Our two *Génie* lieutenants are receiving formidable looking documents relating to their future movements. Everyone is being rounded up, and I expect there'll be lots doing soon.

March 3.

La Mère got back this afternoon from a two days' absence at the Mother House in Paris. It was raining, and all the nuns pattered across the court in their sabots to welcome her, holding huge umbrellas with great care over their caps. They were so full of joy at having their beloved *Mère* among them again, and *she* was so happy to be with them once more; it was a sweet picture. The caps look alike in front, but *La Mère's* is very different in the back, rising to a point, while all the others are just round!

How about the German blockade of U.S.A.? The general opinion here seems to be that the Boche is bluffing. Otherwise, why does n't he sink some American ships? Everyone is very excited by the British progress, and one hears on all sides, "*Les Anglais marchent bien.*" It 's such a great, terrible, sweet, sad world to live in, but always wonderful, and I would not be doing anything else but this, though *se dévouer pour la France* takes many forms, from singing to cleaning knives!

Monday, March 5.

Helen and *les demoiselles* Providence and I had an outing yesterday afternoon. We took the tram at Pont de Pierre, and ran past St. Cyr and Les Maisons Blanches, passing enchanting little houses and mysterious avenues; later, open fields, where old men and women and boys and girls were working, and always on our left the river gleamed. We left the tram at Mareuil, and walked up to Luynes, an adorable village nestling at the foot of the castle. Passing a wonderful old house, called *La maison espagnole*, we presently found ourselves at the bottom of a long, long flight of beautiful steps. When we had climbed to the top, we were on the castle terrace, and turned to such a perfect view of the smiling valley, the tender green of the fields, shimmering in veiled beauty through the soft spring haze. Then we made a tour of the courtyard and the gardens. One does n't visit the house inside, but we went up on the fortifications and saw to the north our towers and Tours, gleaming like an enchanted city, while aeroplanes circled like birds over it. Then we walked to the ruins of the Gallo-Roman Aqueduct; it was strange to stand under those arches and hear overhead the whirr of an *Avion de Chasse!* Walking back to the tram we met a dear old peasant,

driving home her three goats, with her dog, Fidèle; she told us she had also a pony named Bijou. We had a look at one of the strange cliff-dwellings by the river, and then came home. Such a happy, peaceful afternoon; yet one's heart is sore, looking over the lovely country, and thinking of all those who will never, never see it again.

This afternoon we have been busy at La Torterue. There were three ops., big ones, and lots of cleaning up in the operating-room, and needles to thread and tiny wicks to make in preparation for next operating day. Karl, one of the Boches, has been having trouble from abdominal adhesions, so this morning a surgeon came over from Descartes, and operated for that, while Dr. Térrien operated on Karl's eye. His three *Kamerade* were allowed to see him in the recovery room late this afternoon, and enjoyed it, even if he did n't! We also had a visit from an old *civil*, who came over from Chenonceaux to have a terribly infected eye treated. Dr. Cerise cleaned it up and did what he could to alleviate the pain. The poor old *papa* has been in agony for some days, but he bears the frightful pain bravely, as befits a veteran of 1870. I had just invested some of Miss Underhill's money in fruit for La Torterue, so our brave patient was rewarded for his good behavior with *une citronade!* The Château of Chenonceaux is now owned by the *Chocolat Menier* people, and they have turned *La Grande Galerie* into a hospital of sixty beds, with *chauffage centrale*, plumbing, electric lights, and all hospital conveniences; I believe they finance it entirely. Our old veteran went there first, but eyes are n't taken care of anywhere else in the $9^{ième}$ *Région* except at La Torterue.

March 8.

When I was opening the cumbersome blinds this morning, *l'abbé* Pinault was just going to his duties at La Torterue. "*Mais Mademoiselle, vous êtes très matinale, il me semble.*" "*Au contraire, c'est vous, Monsieur l'Abbé, qui l'êtes, puisque vous êtes déjà sorti et je suis toujours chez moi*"! He looked so well in his *bleu horizon*. The big army wagon, drawn by its pair of magnificent grays, passed just then on one of its innumerable journeys, so salutes were exchanged all around. Soon the sun was shining in the wards, and the postman brought a big American mail, the first for a long time, so Mademoiselle Irma insisted I should read your letters, anyway, and I was so glad of all your good news. It's splendid to read how the U.S. is taking the fence at last, but oh, it's so late!

Afterwards, Helen and I assisted at an *énucléation* at La Torterue, making ourselves generally useful in the operating-room. The patient has been at La Bretêche (a big hospital just across the river, also in a Convent) for trepanning and a bad hand; a bursting shell caused all this and left splinters in the eye. He is a little *Parisien*, and fortunately has a wife and child to comfort him. He had only primary ether, and came out very quickly, announcing loudly, "*Tu sais, mon vieux, je n'ai qu'un œil; ils m'ont enlevé l'autre!*" Dr. Térrien operated, and *Mons. l'Abbé* etherized; it was beautifully done, but it's a painful operation to watch, for somehow it hurts one especially to see that member of the body's family taken away. Dr. Térrien gets himself up very daintily, as does *Monsieur l'Abbé*, who is a wonderful combination of strength, sweetness and efficiency. He had a parish in Amboise, but that is now in charge of an older man; mobilization brought our *Abbé* here, and what a treasure he is. The

men simply adore him, and no wonder, for their well-being is his only thought.

March 15.

What a week it's been! The good news from the front is thrilling. . . . Helen and I have been sending *colis* to the fighting brothers and cousins and nephews of the nuns (many of whom are prisoners). We meet in the *Economat* and with Sœur Catherine and Sœur Maxime to help us, we make up wonderful parcels of eatables permitted by the Boche, and socks and other things; Sœur Marie-Eudoxie gives us the names from a long list the nuns send to regularly. I am using almost the last of my funds for these *colis*, but more will come. Yesterday, René came to say good-bye; he is going *en permission agricole* for a month. Also Clovis and Fernand came to have their pictures taken, and Sœur Donatienne and I had out all the lovely old chairs from the officers' dining-room, and stood them in the cloister while we waxed and polished them. She is such a dear to work with. This week, too, *Salle* 1 has been having its spring cleaning from ceiling to floor; *les demoiselles* Providence and I have had a busy time, but it looks so nice and fresh, now it's all done.

Monday night as we were going off to bed, we met Sœur Aline crossing the court with a *militaire reformé*. He was homeward bound for *le Midi*, and had just come from le Mans, where the nuns have a house. The poor soul is voiceless from shell-shock, and well used up generally, but how he enjoyed the good supper Sœur Aline had us take to him; soup and eggs and potatoes, with apple sauce and cheese for dessert. "*Comment, vous lui donnez gras un jour maigre?*" said Sœur Hégésippe. "*Mais vous savez bien que les militaires ne doivent pas*

faire maigre!" answered Sœur Celestine. She is pretty, makes divine omelettes, and is the sister of Sœur Albanie, who takes such good care of Captain Billion-Bourbon.

Thursday evening Miss Guerber (a delightful American woman, who was caught by the war in Tours, and is the third American in the city) got *La Mère's* permission to have a little evening of music. *La Mère* came herself and stayed through, and Miss Guerber asked all the *dames refugiées* and some of our military family. What a concert it was! First of all, "Tipperary," by request; and then "Swanee River" and other American folk-songs, also by request. Then many French songs, songs in English, and of course at the end the hymns of the Allies, including "The Star-Spangled Banner." "*Puisque nous sommes déjà alliés par le cœur*, Miss!" It was picturesque to hear the click of Lt. Santucchi's spurs on the stone floor as every one stood up for the Allies' hymns. He and his wife are charming people; she comes to our table. Everyone seemed to have such a good time, and at the end there was dear Sœur Albanie, waiting to guide us down the dark little steps and across the court with her faithful lantern.

The next day I got word that the Olmsteds' puzzles were at the station, so I sallied down in the afternoon to claim them, and signed innumerable papers guaranteeing their harmlessness. They will mean so much pleasure to the men, and it was good of the Olmsteds to send them.

These are cheerful days at La Torterue. Pierre is soon to be fitted to his artificial hands, and Doyé is to be operated on shortly. He has been happier since the arrival of a Lieutenant of *Tirailleurs d'Afrique*, who takes a great interest in Doyé, and is able to speak his dialect. The lieutenant took Doyé out for a walk one day; I met them as I was going to the hospital, and Doyé

was actually laughing! One has to know the abysmal depths of his melancholy to appreciate the change. Karl is doing very well, and making great progress with French and English; now, he says, "Good-night, Miss," when I leave. One of the *poilus* has taught him this. Karl has no desire to go back to Germany, but looks forward to England or America, though I do my best to discourage that idea. The last time we were there we were saying to a *poilu*, how strange it was not to feel more personal enmity between the *poilus* and the Boche prisoners. "*Eh bien, voyez vous*, Miss, *la souffrance est individuelle mais la rancune nationale.*"

I have been to the Musée this afternoon. There is a good collection of pictures, and many interesting things. For example, the bed that Napoleon slept in when he was in Tours. But the garden was best of all, with its long noble terrace and alleys of clipped trees. Below, children were playing, and their mothers were sitting near, talking and knitting in the warm spring sun. It was a wonderful feeling to steep one's self in the peace and beauty of it all. I walked home by the *Tour de Guise* and along the river-bank, where I passed a magnificent young Sheik, be-medalled and superb in his spotless white robes and head-dress.

March 18.

Is n't the news *wonderful!* You can't imagine the thrill of living in a country where such an advance is taking place. Some of our refugee ladies come from Noyons, and the emotions of the last days have been almost too much for them. If we can only take St. Quentin. I can never forget Sunday morning and the first rumors of *la prise de Bapaume.* It was a glorious morning, and everyone was touched with joy and excitement and gratitude.

Being the fourth Sunday in Lent, it was permissible to have singing at mass, so I sang the Franck "Panis Angelicus" and the Bach-Gounod "Ave Maria" at *la messe de la Communauté*. Sœur Marie-Vincent, who is a splendid musician, accompanied me wonderfully, and I loved doing it; there was a special happiness about singing on such a day of thanksgiving. At one came the papers, and we all gathered round Lt. Bouryot, who had hobbled out into the court to read us the details. In the afternoon, Madame Sourdillon had her *fête* in the Salle Brunet, and when I sang "God Save the King," the audience could n't wait for the end to applaud and cheer and call, "*Vive les Anglais!*" The whole *fête* was a great success, but that was the crowning moment. Our day was n't over even then, for in the evening Helen took Miss Guerber and me to a performance at the *Théâtre Français* for the benefit of the Fund for *les Prisonniers de Guerre du Département*. It was a wonderful evening. The theatre was packed, and nine hundred francs taken in the *quête* alone. General Lacotte and his staff were there, and lots of troops from the garrison, all *en tenue de ville*, and Dr. Térrien, who came and spoke to us. The programme was varied and interesting, — songs, recitations, and violin-playing. It ended with an enchanting comedy by Meilhac, "L'été de la St. Martin," done by people down from Paris. We got home very late, and crept in by the Chapel door. Dear Sœur Thomassine let us in. She had waited for us after finishing her *Adoration*.

March 23.

The last days have come, and they are hard. These have been happy months with Helen, and everyone in this dear old Convent, and though I am anxious for my bit in England, still it 's not easy leaving here. Tuesday

La Mère gave me permission to invite all of my patients to hear me sing, and they in their turn had prepared a surprise for Helen and me. In their dining-room was spread a delicious little repast, *pâtisseries* and *Vouvray Mousseux*, and my godson, the *Chasseur*, made me, for them all, a most charming little speech, which none but a child of France could have imagined or made. It was a real surprise, and I was so overcome that I don't know what I said, for I was too moved to be able to appear otherwise. It was a pity some little bird had not whispered to us of the surprise, for Helen had arranged to take me out of town that afternoon, and we had to cut short the delightful party; it will always be a regret for me that it had to be so. . . . We went out by tram to St. Avertin, where we were met by a boy from La Branchoire, where Helen's attractive friend, Mlle. d'Ornano, lives. The boy was leading a huge black dog, very old, who was returning, we learned, from *un séjour chez le véterinaire*. We all started off together, and after a walk of about two kilometres we came to the dense woods which surround La Branchoire. Presently we turned in at the gate, and we were there. Our dog friend was released and promptly retired to his kennel to forget his troubles in slumber. The *château* is simple, a long *façade*, with a terrace from which one looks down a wide grass avenue toward the village of Chambray. Mlle. Vannina and her aunt, Mlle. de Reyneval, and four fox terriers were waiting to greet us. We spent two delightful hours with them in a lovely Louis XIV drawing-room, full of interesting and lovely things, each one with its story. Mlle. de Reyneval told us that an ancestor, Claude de Reyneval, was an ambassador to the United States, and she showed us an engraving of his portrait by Peale, which hangs in Independence Hall. We also saw a little

war book, full of snapshots taken by Captain d'Ornano, and letters to him from his men, and copies of his *citations*. He must be a fine sort, a born soldier and leader. They are a military family, for a d'Ornano was one of Napoleon's marshals. It was a wonderful afternoon, spent with two rare people. After a little music and tea, Helen and I walked back to the tram through a torrent of rain which had long been threatening. The country was lovely, even in the rain, but there is a feeling of profound sadness over everything; how can it be otherwise?

Fernand and Clovis came to-day to ask me whether they might not come and get my luggage in a little handcart from La Torterue. I can't let them do that, but they are to come to the station to see me off. *La Mère* has just given me some little treasures; a penholder from Lourdes, and a carved wooden box made by one of the nuns. How dear they've all been to me, and how little I've done for them, compared with what I should like to have done. It's not three months since I came, and yet how much a part of my life it has all become. Good-night, now. I'm going to say good-bye to my dear *demoiselles* Providence and to Sœur Donatienne. I shall write from Paris. Things may be a little troublesome about my getting through, but I hope not to be delayed long. I shall get Madame Lebon's box off this time, and I hope to see Madame Laporte. Here is a copy of the speech:—

Permettez-moi, au nom de "votre petite famille" comme vous vous plaisiez à l'appeler, de vous remercier pour l'audition que vous venez de nous offrir et pendant laquelle nous avons pu apprécier tout votre talent que nous goûtâmes déjà dimanche dernier. Qu'il me soit surtout permis de vous dire toute notre affection et notre recon-

naissance pour les soins que vous nous avez prodigués avec tant de dévouement et de joie. Vous retournez là-bas en Amérique, bien loin de nous, dans votre patrie qui est cependant bien près de la nôtre par le cœur et la pensée. Nous esperons que vous n'emporterez point un mauvais souvenir de l'hôpital où vous fûtes la bienvenue. Quant à nous, Miss, *soyez assurée que toujours et de tous, vous conserverez l'affection et la gratitude.*

WITH THE 76TH DETACHMENT, CHESHIRE COUNTY DIVISION, BRITISH RED CROSS SOCIETY

VERNON INSTITUTE HOSPITAL,
GREAT SAUGHALL, NEAR CHESTER,
April 12.

THERE'S much to tell you since I wrote Easter afternoon. I spoke to you then about the three lovely days I spent with the Frosts; I can never forget the warmth and kindness of their hospitality; from the moment Mrs. Frost welcomed me Thursday, I felt as though I had a real home. We have had such a good time of all sorts, from lots of music to driving Mona, most adorable pony of all, bar one! Now I am at work again, and feel well settled in the new life which began on Monday at nine. There is much that is bewildering in the new routine, but everyone has been so good in "putting me wise," especially Staff-Nurse Wigg, our ranking V.A.D. and Sister Johnston's right hand. The hospital is not quite full, so we have extra time which Matron uses to get extras done, such as paint-washing and cupboards cleaned up. Matron is very nice and capable, and has splendid ideas in every way. Vernon Institute in peace times was the recreation centre of the village, with a large gymnasium, billiard-rooms, bathrooms, and a kitchen, so that it is admirably adapted to hospital use. Staff-Nurse, Sister, another V.A.D. and I sleep in a dear little cottage across the road from the hospital; in this same cottage the men have a billiard-room, with comfy chairs, a fireplace, and lots of books. Their dining-room is here, too, for though *we* get their other meals in the hospital kitchen, their dinner is cooked for them here by Mrs. Rowlands, who also cooks for us, and whose milk-puddings I adore. We take care of the men's table and ours, and serve them at dinner. My room is up under the eaves, and I'm very

comfy there, and it's a joy to have a bathroom again, even though there are several of us to share it. The men are a fine lot; we get on splendidly, and already it all seems as natural as the life in France. One of the men in Vernon (formerly two billiard-rooms, and now the ward in which I am) has lost part of one foot from frost-bite. He suffers agonies when it is dressed, but he is so plucky that it helps one's own courage. His name is Heywood; he's a slight young chap, but he has seen lots of service in France and Gallipoli. In the next bed to him is a Welshman, with a delicious accent, who keeps the men laughing with an endless fund of stories. In the other ward is a young Canadian named Holland, with the strongest Yankee accent I've ever heard; he brought me your first letters since I've been here. The men who are up and able to, help a lot with some of the work. Otherwise, we should n't get on so well, as except for Mrs. Jones, who scrubs the kitchen tiles and blacks the stove, five V.A.D.'s on days and two on nights do all the work in this hospital of forty-six beds.

Tuesday afternoon we had a concert in Vernon Ward. Mrs. Frost brought over Linda, and an R.N.A.S. man, who has a splendid voice. One of our V.A.D.'s has a beautiful voice, and we four sang all sorts of things, Mrs. Frost and I dividing the playing. The R.N.A.S. man delighted the men with "Rolling down to Rio," Linda and I did "Some Sort of Somebody" from "Very Good Eddie," and "Poor Butterfly" was introduced to Saughall. Of course we ended with the Allies' hymns, and how proud I was to have "The Star-Spangled Banner" among them at last. It was the first time it had been heard in this part of the country, and the men cheered it to the echo. Altogether, it was a great party, though it meant a good bit of extra work before and after.

Saughall is a sweet village, neat yet picturesque. There are dear brick and plaster cottages, with spotlessly curtained windows, framing glowing plants, and outside trim little gardens. Already I am beginning to know what an English spring is; the trees are bursting with blossoms, birds sing all day long, grass and hedges grow greener every day, and banks are studded with adorable primroses, daffodils and violets, and oh, such delicious soft air. It's every bit as wonderful as one has imagined it, as all really wonderful things are.

April 17.

Yesterday I had to go down to Birkenhead and register at the County Police and leave my finger-print! It was raining, but not so hard that I did n't enjoy the walk across country from here to Mollington, where I "entrained." This was my morning on dressings; Sister is a splendid surgical nurse, and Staff-Nurse a wonder, and I'm learning so much from them. I am just off duty after preparing for eight stretcher cases which are due this evening. Everyone is excited, as this is the first convoy in weeks, and the men are keen to get the latest news of Fritz. I have been filling hot-water bottles, laying out dressing-gowns, night-shirts, helpless shirts for possible arm cases, seeing that mugs, soap, and towels are in every locker, besides doing the usual last job of tidying the wards, empting ash trays and leaving fires and kitchen right for the night staff. Mrs. Frost has just come down to receive the convoy, and to get details of next of kin and so on from the men. She is in her commandant's uniform of scarlet, and looks stunning. I must get to bed, to be ready to cope with the new world to-morrow.

April 18.

No more paint-cleaning! We got eight stretcher cases in about ten last night, and sixteen more came during the night. They are mostly from the Vimy Ridge fighting; one man "got his" at St. Eloi, and is terribly wounded and used up, but is as cheerful as can be. "We're winning," is everyone's tale. I was "on dinners" to-day, and twenty-nine men in bed meant carrying over seven trays twice, and it is quite a distance from the hospital to the cottage; also Dr. Lees came just at dinner-time, which delayed things, and we did not get our dinner until after two. But one did n't mind anything; the men were so happy and grateful. It was all just one big day of sunshine and joy. It has been a wonderful day for me in more ways than one. . . .

April 21.

Thursday was my afternoon off, and Mrs. Frost took me down to Tarporley with Linda and Mr. Wardell-Yerborough (the R.N.A.S. man). We gave a concert at Portal, Mrs. Marshall Brooks's house, which she has turned into a hospital. It's a beautiful old place, full of lovely things, standing high, with a glorious outlook. We had about thirty-five Tommies for our audience, and they seemed pleased at our show, which was much like the programme here, only we had n't Nurse Yeoward's lovely voice. Once again "The Star-Spangled Banner" had an ovation! Tarporley is in the hunting part of Cheshire; I saw some good horses about, and loved feeling the horse atmosphere again. Beeston Castle is near the village, a picturesque ruin, dating from the thirteenth century, and destroyed in Cromwell's time. It towers over the surrounding country; there is a dug well on the hill, said to be one of the deepest in England.

We had a tremendous day yesterday; even the afternoon was exciting, for ever so many of the men had had presents of eggs, and these were to be cooked at tea-time; this made our own tea late, and then came the usual routine of bed-making, washes, starting supper, and fourteen fomentations for me to do in Vernon alone! I was off at seven for good, and glad to lie in the hammock with my unread afternoon letters and a poetry book, and forget all but lovely thoughts. To-day was again my afternoon off, and I went to Chester, which was very brilliant. The streets were thronged with soldiers, and convalescents in picturesque blue hospital suits; the uniforms of different Scotch regiments, and an occasional French or Belgian soldier made the gray old walls bright with color. I opened an account at the bank, had tea at Bolland's (*the* confectioner), did the hospital errands, and came home. I should like to have been there yesterday; it was "America's day," and while our flag flew from the same pole as the Union Jack on the Victoria Tower of the Houses of Parliament, London, Chester, too, broke out the Stars and Stripes from every building, and the people wore tiny ones in their buttonholes. Linda sent me down a little silk one to celebrate the day, and I arranged it with the other Allied flags in Vernon, but Feeley, an R.F.A. driver, who enlisted from America, "pinched" it and stuck it over his bed! The men are getting ready for an exhibition and sale on St. George's Day, of the work they have been doing during the winter; they work in beads, raffia and embroidery. It's a great interest and helps pass the long hours for the men who are in bed. The Anglo-American meeting in London must have been thrilling. You can have no idea the profound joy and gratitude there is everywhere in England. I shall never forget that glorious morning in London when I sat at breakfast reading Wilson's memorable speech.

April 27.

Yesterday was my afternoon off, and Mrs. Frost took Linda and me down to Parkgate Military Hospital. It has a wonderful situation, right on the Esplanade, bordering the Dee estuary. We had tea with Mrs. Henry Gladstone, who is particularly interested in this hospital, and the Matron. Then we went over the building, which has a fine open-air ward and an operating-room, both added since the war. We had our music in the big recreation room, overlooking the bowling-green. One of the men played really well; two others sang; and eight together gave an amusing sketch with topical verses on the hospital. Mrs. Gladstone asked for the "Irish Folk Song" from me, and Linda sang lots of nice things, and we all sang "Love's Old Sweet Song"; what a volume of sound the men made! Miss Mary Carmichael, who came with Mrs. Gladstone, played her splendid "Triumphal March" and we finished with "La Marseillaise," "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "God Save the King." Then the men gave three cheers for us, and one Tommy stood up and made a nice short speech about the United States; already, when I had been introduced as representing "our latest Ally," the applause had rocked the house, and the speech brought another round. It was great fun altogether. We had a good run back: the country was so lovely and full of peace. One is always baffled when one looks at this country, and thinks of the devastated part of France. We passed what was left of a big stack of oats; an incendiary fire had destroyed almost all. One suspects a Hun origin of such fires; this was the second in the week. It is so dreadful to think of such waste just now. Romney's Lady Hamilton came from near Parkgate.

I have had such a splendid V.A.D. in the ward this week: Nurse Clayton, who lives near here; I am learning

every day! Next week I am moving to a dear little cottage, called Wakefield. Mrs. Frost knew the lady who has the house, and that there was a room free; it will be quieter there when I am on night-duty. It's just a little way up the Blacon Road, and the walk to and from duty will be pleasant.

April 28.

Many thanks for your good letters and the maple sugar, which came this morning. I was so interested in the recruiting notices, and loved the picture of Ensign Blake. The American number of the Illustrated London News had a picture of the "Lynx," and her commander at the wheel; everyone was delighted that the one picture of an American naval officer should turn out to be someone I knew. The maple sugar is delicious, and makes me think of days and places very different from these. There are three Canadians wounded at Vimy Ridge in Vernon, who came in last week's convoy; they, especially, loved the maple sugar, though there was a taste for every man in the ward. Work is hard this week. We have had an amputation to-day, and there are lots of big dressings. It's a good steady programme, but working conditions are good, and the system is admirable, and all goes well.

Since it is not comfortable for you to have me on the water just now, I shall not plan to come home at present. Conditions will improve with time, and meanwhile it is a joy for me to stay on here, for they need me more than ever; we have lost another V.A.D. from the staff, and the summer promises to be very busy. I wonder whether this is not the beginning of the distant end? Even with your big hearts and sympathy and imagination, you can hardly realize how terrible the strain is, nor how one longs for

the end. England carries her sorrows differently from France; besides, she has been spared the unspeakable horrors of invasion, but she feels the war none the less deeply for France as well as herself. What she has done for France, besides fighting next her, will make a sublime story when it is told. Though one misses the thrill of being on the very soil where the struggle is going on, still it is wonderful to be living in England now. There is the same complete and sympathetic understanding of our problems here as there was in France. You must not think that life here makes me forget the troubles and cares and uneasiness at home; only there's nothing for us all to do now but sit tight and work and fight until we win, even if it takes all our lives; so *uneasiness* can have no lasting place in one's mind.

May 3.

This is my first week of night-duty, and thanks to the kind V.A.D., Miss Podmore, who is on with me, I am getting on well. The nights are beautiful, warm and fragrant, and I spend my off-duty time sitting out back of the kitchen; it's a joy to be awake, and so soon comes the first faint light, then a bird's shy note, and little by little the incomparable pageant of a May dawn. The nights go very fast: we iron bandages and slings from nine till midnight, when it's time to cook dinner for Sister and ourselves; after that comes washing-up, stoking three fires, ward duty, and mending "hospital blues" until off-duty time. Sometimes the patients are restless, but tonight everything is very quiet. We shall have our tea at four, then cut mountains of bread for the men's breakfast, set the table, and at six wake the troops and give them morning tea, which helps in the waking. After that, marvels are accomplished; bed-patients given washes,

and rubbed; beds made; and the ward is swept and polished. Fortunately, in each ward a certain number of convalescents take hold and help out, so all goes smoothly, and with a great flow of good-humor and jokes. By seven, work is well under way; brass and nickel being polished, floors shining like mirrors, cups and saucers appear at the bed-patients' tables, while the kitchen presents a scene of great activity. Toast is being made with a toasting-fork (slow work), bacon is cooking, water boiling for tea, and special diets are under way. About 7.30, it looks like a losing game, but somehow the bell rings at eight, bed-patients are already eating a good Blighty breakfast, and our hungry and industrious family are sitting down at two tables and make short work of everything. After that comes washing-up (again the men help), and leaving the kitchen swept and tidy for the day's start. Then comes our own breakfast, the letters, and a little walk before bath and turning in. I keep so well awake all night, I sometimes sleep till seven when I get to bed. Sister has me in the big ward this week, which is harder, but I have a splendid bed-maker in Barclay, a Gordon Highlander, and we get done very nicely after all. I heard a cuckoo as I was walking before duty last night; I have not heard one since we were in Münster am Stein!

2 A.M., May 6.

I got up at 3.30 yesterday afternoon, and went to sing for the patients at Hoole House, a hospital of seventy beds, the other side of Chester. Mrs. Frost and Linda took me over, and Lady Hall, who is Commandant, and the Matron received us. Lady Hall has a daughter driving an ambulance in France, and a son in the R.F.C., whom I have met. Linda and I and a pretty girl named Hartridge sang; also a youngster named Richmond, who

has just gone into a Cadet Corps. Also there was a man who told funny stories. I did all the playing; the men seemed very keen about the show, and we all joined in "When Irish Eyes are Smiling." There was great applause when Lady Hall made a little speech about my representing "our latest Ally"; it's always rather tremendous, that applause for U.S., and one remembers with what patience and restraint they waited for us to come in. Lady Hall took us home to supper; we had such a jolly time. This is the last of our sings, as Linda is going to work in London; I shall miss her. I must take up my nocturnal activities now.

May 8.

We are having beautiful bright days, and the country is glorious; the fields glow like emeralds, and the fruit trees are a mass of bloom. Almost every cottage garden has wall-flowers, and the air is filled with their delicious fragrance. Everyone thought yesterday was too hot, but it felt nice to me, — not really hot like our days. I was in Chester for my off-duty time, to send some of Charlotte's money to France. Afterwards I walked around the walls, and went into the Cathedral for a few minutes; it's such peace just to be there. Linda met me, and drove me home in the pony cart; it was a nice afternoon.

Everyone is getting on well; many men get out into the garden of the cottage and spend the whole day there, and the groups of "hospital blues" sitting or lying on the grass are a pretty picture. That's the proudest suit one can wear now! A splendid youngster from the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders came to us straight from the field dressing-station last Saturday. He has a bad compound fracture of the tibia, but it's doing well; he got here frightfully exhausted, and for days took no notice

of anything. No wonder, for he has been through terrible fighting. I said to him yesterday that his regiment must have lost very heavily. He looked at me grimly, and said: "Nurse, the battalion was repulsed; do ye ken what *repulsed* means?" His name is Gray; his officer has recommended him for gallantry in action, and Gray treasures under his pillow such a nice letter the officer wrote Gray's mother.

I have much news from Tours. Lieut. Bourseul* is already flying at Avord; Fernand writes me that he has been *en permission agricole*, working sixteen hours a day in the Pas de Calais: the cannonading is fearful, and crowds of British wounded pour through his village daily. He says there is an American flag hanging over the entrance of 88 bis. More than that, he has seen some *fusiliers marins américains* on the Rue Nationale! . . . I was coming back to duty from a little walk the other night and, passing the hospital, I heard three songs being played: three songs by an American composer I know very well! It was strange and sweet to hear them so, and they brought back many memories. I have lent all my serious music to an R.A.M.C. orderly, Armitage. Though he is a patient, he does *so* much to help us V.A.D.'s; music is his great talent and pleasure, so when he has a chance he likes to read through everything I have. We had an informal sing-song the other night. Nurse Yeoward sang "Mother Machree," and I sang a little, and we got all the men singing; Armitage played the rags the men love especially: "Mysterious Rag," "Alexander's Ragtime Band," "Ragtime Violin," and other old friends, including the "Quaker Girl Waltz," which is always sung with a will. It was 8.30 all too soon, and Matron came along to say, "Now, boys, time to be off to bed"; so we all sang "Auld Lang Syne," and everything was over.

* This gallant officer was killed in 1918.

Thanks so much for the letters, which came this morning, and the many cuttings. The package from Melvin and Badger has finally gotten through, but we won't try another.

May 10.

We are having a soft spring rain to-day, so I am spending my off-duty time by the fire in our cottage. It has been a gay week; we had a concert party from Chester one evening, and as they were one short, I filled in with American songs and "Annie Laurie," and played for Feeley. The next evening Mr. Morris came down from Shotwick Park, and sang "The Galloping Major"; sometime I'll tell you more about it. Gray almost fell out of bed laughing; he has not had many entertainments lately, being otherwise engaged! He is coming on well. He joined up under age, and I asked him if his people did n't mind. "They *had* to let me go, Nurse," he said; I expect he's a regular fire-eater, though he's gentle enough to take care of, and so plucky about his dressing, which is very painful just now. Our other Jock, in the Gordons, has gone on furlough, and will soon be in France again. Pennock, an insurance clerk, with whom I discuss during work many things, including Gregg shorthand, is going to Fazakerly this week for examination and probably operation by Robert Jones, the great orthopedic man. There are always changes. As you see, I am back on days, and in Vernon Ward again. Company Quartermaster Sergeant Crabtree has been moved up to the gallery from Thornycroft, and helps me mornings and evenings with the spreads. He is a Canadian, getting over trench fever; a slow business, there are so many ups and downs to it. The new cases, quite apart from their wounds, have a sort of reaction; little upsets, chills, and

mysterious temperatures. One never knows how one will find them; and *how* they sleep, almost all day in the beginning.

May 13.

It's a beautiful clear evening; we have been having warm days, but heavy thunder showers last night cooled the air, and our green world is lovelier than ever to-night. I came off duty at seven, and had an enchanting little walk along the lane which skirts our garden walls, and leads to the beautiful woods which are part of the Shotwick estate. We are allowed to wander through them all we like, and it's wonderful to have them so near. The Welsh hills were very clear to-night, and all was so peaceful and indescribably lovely; the fresh tender green of larches, willows and nut trees, and always the great glory of the fruit trees. But in the valley was the grim reminder of what is forever going on; the countless tall chimneys of the munition works, belching forth smoke and fumes, day and night.

The village street is full of life to-night; villagers and their Sunday visitors are wandering up and down, and a big official car has just rushed through. Matron is having overcoat inspection, for to-morrow we go to Chester to see the King. He is making a short tour in this part of the country, and comes to Chester for an Investiture, and to inspect certain industries in the neighborhood. This hospital will be represented by all the patients who are able to go, Mrs. Frost as Commandant, the original members of the V.A.D. detachment, Matron, and both Sisters. As Mrs. Frost will not need her ticket to the enclosure, Mr. Frost is taking me; is n't it wonderful! Matron has been so kind, and arranged for someone to take my place during the three hours I must be gone. . . .

Evening work is hard now, as we have many cases of trench-feet, which means lots of rubs. Sergeant Jennings, a nice man of twenty-four, is one of my patients; he seems so much older than his age, like everyone who has been out. Crabtree and Drummond came and sat on the edge of the next bed while I was rubbing Sergeant's feet last night; the three talked so interestingly of the war, experiences of every sort, tactics, mistakes, comedy and tragedy, great moments and very small ones. It's wonderful stuff to listen to.

May 14.

The great day is over, with nothing to mar it, but the troops are very tired to-night, and no wonder, for they began with breakfast at six. The Night-Staff worked heroically; all dressings were done before nine, and the ambulance took in the men who were going by ten. It was a heavenly morning, clear and fresh, with only a hint of cloud to disturb one. Ruffett and O'Neil, for whom there was no room in the ambulance, went in the train with me. O'Neil is a fresh-faced lad from County Mayo, who got hit with shrapnel in the arm at Vimy Ridge. He is now attached to the Middlesex Regiment, but really belongs to the Fifth Lancers, an Irish regiment, and had his horse shot under him in the Dublin disorders. We got through Chester nicely, though crowds were forming fast, and just as we neared the Castle, we had the pleasure of seeing our detachment march past, Mrs. Frost at the head; they looked splendidly. Ambulances filled with sitting wounded, private motors with more of the same, batches of convalescent officers from Eaton Hall and Hawarden, other V.A.D. detachments — all these poured by in a seemingly endless stream. Presently Mr. Frost arrived, and we walked in the Castle gate together. The

Square was already lined; our detachment on the left, then wounded; back of the big statue of Queen Victoria, the home battalion of the Cheshires and their band; next them, convalescent officers, and on the other side, Hoole House, and other detachments, and army nurses of the Territorial Nursing Force. In the centre of the Square stood a platform, and facing that, the officers and men to be decorated and various Staff personages. Mr. Frost and I were taken to a small enclosure to the right of the gate, he receiving many salutes on the way. We waited a little, but the time passed quickly, as there were constant arrivals to interest one — the Duke of Westminster — and others. The band, which had been playing, suddenly stopped; up over the Castle tower went the Royal standard. We heard a roar of voices from the bridge, and turning, saw the Royal car slowly approaching. It rolled in through the gate, and I had such a good view of the King and Queen; they looked just like their pictures, and I seemed to have seen them often before. It was a choky moment, for so much surged up in one's mind and heart. Mr. Gladstone,* who is Lord Lieutenant of Flintshire, whence they came, was with them.† The motor stopped by the platform, and they got out; I heard people saying how much more worn the King looked than the last time he was here. He was in uniform, of course, and the Queen was charming in a soft gray coat and skirt, to which her flower hat and cherry-colored sunshade gave color. When the King mounted the platform, the band played "God Save the King," and then there *was* a noise! Then silence; their Majesties took their places, A.D.C.'s and lady-in-

* Henry Neville Gladstone, third son of the late Right Honorable William Ewart Gladstone.

† It is customary for the Lord Lieutenant of the county in which the King is to escort him to the next county.

waiting grouped themselves behind them, and the ceremony began. The Duke of Westminster was decorated first, a D.S.O.; then several other officers, and then some Tommies. As General Pitcairn-Campbell read the citations, my thoughts went back to Tours, and the *remise de décoration*. Here, too, the same beautiful precision of movement; each man went up the little steps, was decorated, had a few words and a hand-shake from the King, saluted, stepped back one pace, right turned, saluted the Queen, and went down other little steps. When all the men had been up, the King stepped down to decorate a Tommy from Hoole House with twelve wounds, who lay weak and helpless in his wheel-chair. His matron had been standing behind him, but she stepped back to leave him alone with his King and his Queen. He fainted from emotion and weakness, I suppose, and the matron had to wheel him off. It was immensely touching, and broke one up entirely. After that, their Majesties, the General and Staff passed the whole assemblage in review from right to left. The King stopped to speak to a few Tommies, usually ones in wheel-chairs, and when he got to our men, he spoke to Heywood, the plucky chap of whom I have written you; I was so pleased. I thought our Commandant made an especially nice courtesy when the Queen spoke to her. It was a brilliant picture; the khaki, the blue of the hospital suits, the varied uniforms of the nurses, and the scarlet of the commandants; the warm May sun brought out every detail against the old stone building. All of a sudden, everything was over. The big motor drew up, their Majesties got in, accompanied this time by the Duke, who is Lord Lieutenant of Cheshire, and they were off. I could hardly realize it had all happened. Presently the great mass of personages, convalescents, and nurses

poured out; the streets were packed with ambulances, official motors, and people on foot, and getting back looked difficult. But Mrs. Frost took me home to luncheon with her, and I was on duty again before two. What an excitement there was in the hospital; the men were all gathered about Heywood, calling him Sir Harold, and Jock, whose bed had been carried out into the courtyard, was saying to anyone who had time to listen, that King George was "nae king of mine; I fought for my country, but nae English king. The English killed all our kings." We had hard work to bring him to terms. Such an afternoon of work it has been, but a great day altogether. I must turn in now, for Dr. Lees comes to-morrow for a general inspection, and it's my morning on dressings.

May 19.

It's a warm, beautiful afternoon, and I'm just off duty, sitting in a cool corner, looking out over this dear garden, which is lovelier than ever after two days' rain. The lilies of the valley are in full bloom, and the long borders are gay with yellows weet alyssum, wallflowers, tulips, and forget-me-nots. Staff-Nurse and Earle are playing mild tennis, while Sister Jock and two patients look on from the summerhouse. Earle is a Yorkshireman, a shell-shock patient, and getting on well. He's awfully keen on flowers, and keeps the hospital and cottage full of them all the time. The week has been a whirl. Wednesday came the men's party; Colwell, who was a clerk in a shipping office, and is making a slow recovery from trench feet, was the moving spirit in organizing the party, but every man in the hospital backed him up, financially and otherwise. Here is the invitation:

The Patients of the Vernon Institute Hospital
request the pleasure of your company
at the opening of the Tennis Court
and to tea on
Wednesday, May 16, at 3 P.M.
Miss Vernon has kindly consented to perform
the opening ceremony.
Kindly reply by Saturday, May 12, to
O. J. E. Colwell, on behalf of the patients.

By Tuesday the committee was at fever heat, and anxiety about the weather oppressed everyone. Every able-bodied patient was busy, cutting the grass, rolling and marking out the tennis court, laying out clock golf and croquet. In the afternoon, the committee and Sister Jock betook themselves to Chester, whence they returned at tea-time *in a taxi* (!), tired but triumphant, bearing treasures in the shape of real butter, a special mixture of tea, cream, fruits for a salad, and watercress and cucumbers for sandwiches. One of the committee, Drummond, had even sent to his native Glasgow for cakes, which arrived by that afternoon post, creating more excitement. Wednesday dawned damp and overcast, but by three, when Miss Vernon sent the first ball over the net, the weather had cleared, and we could n't have had a more perfect afternoon. Gray and two men were having a bad day, could n't be moved, but everyone else was carried out, — in several cases beds and all, — and lined up facing the tennis court, while the others who were n't able to move about, settled themselves on chairs and on cushions about the beds. Miss Vernon, charming in white and her pretty hat, stood by the entrance arch of the tennis court, and as she declared the season of tennis opened, untied the ribbons which stretched across; flanking the arch were the Union Jack and Tricolor,

surmounted by the Stars and Stripes. Staff-Nurse and Drummond (who has played for Scotland) and Nurse Davey and Crabtree played a short convalescent set, and then came tea. Matron had lent her own silver for the tea-table, which was resplendent besides with a huge bowl of white lilacs. Mrs. Frost, Mrs. Nicholson (our Quartermaster), Miss Vernon, Miss Broadbent, Dr. Parry, Matron, the Sisters, and all of us sat at small tables, while the men served us. It was a delicious tea, and how wonderfully we were waited on. After tea, Thompson, whose foot came off last week, made a very nice speech of thanks on behalf of the patients to their guests, and "Sir Harold" presented Miss Vernon with a glorious bunch of roses. Then sports were resumed, and a fortune-teller was discovered in the summerhouse, who told amazing fortunes. This was Private Ford, who has lost five brothers in the war. Half-past six came all too soon; the Staff gave three cheers for the patients, the patients did the same for the Staff, the fortune-teller closed his tent, and we adjourned to the big ward for a splendid sing-song. The patients gave a deliciously funny glee party, full of local hits. Here's a conundrum they asked. "Why is a leave-train like the American flag?" "Because it's full of stars and stripes." (Stars being rank insignia for officers up to major, stripes being privates' insignia.) Then there were topical verses sung to "Tennessee," "Swanee River," "Kentucky Jubilee," and "There's a Girl in Havana." Even this wonderful party had to end, however, and soon after nine supper was over, we had "God Save the King," and before long our tired but happy family were asleep. Colwell said this morning, "We could have done much more, but not so nicely." But *we* can't imagine what more there was to wish for.

Thursday, part of the Staff and ten patients went to the

Cathedral to the Red Cross service. Nurse Yeoward motored Staff-Nurse and me in, and we joined the others at the Town Hall, where Katharine, Duchess of Westminster, who is President of the Cheshire Branch of B.R.C.S., gave us all tea. She is a handsome woman, with a lovely gracious manner. After tea, we formed and marched by twos into the Cathedral, which was crowded. About two hundred V.A.D.'s and St. John's Ambulance workers sat in the choir stalls and in the stalls beyond, while in the congregation sat groups of convalescents from all the different hospitals, and Red Cross and St. John's men workers. The service was simple, beautiful, and very impressive. The Dean preached a short sermon on the work of the Red Cross and St. John's Ambulance, giving thanks for all that had been done, and praying that strength would be given them to go on. It was glorious to hear "God Save the King" ring out at the end of the service, both the volume of sound and the fervor were thrilling to hear and feel.

We have had a very strenuous morning to-day for six stretcher cases came in from Dover during the night. They are all bad fractures and one poor boy has terrible wounds at the top of his spine. He is in agony; I have turned him and tried to make him comfortable so many times this morning, and every time I went to him the slow tears were rolling down his cheeks. He's a little more at ease since his wounds were dressed, but the dressing was hideous.

Nurse Lloyd has gone home to convalesce after her measles. Mrs. Williamson has calcimined both our rooms and gone over the whole house with disinfectant, and everything is as sweet as can be. I am glad to be back at Wakefield, and am feeling as splendidly well and fit as ever. Mrs. Williamson spoils me dreadfully, but I love it.

Their garden grows lovelier every day; Mr. Williamson was station-master at Capenhurst for a long time; the station was famous for its flowers, and he has carried his garden ideas into his retirement. This is the day I should be sailing for home. . . .

May 29.

Last week brought still another excitement, for on Wednesday Miss Vernon gave us a garden party! Again the weather was kind, and blue skies and warm air made the day a delight. Except for the bed-patients, all the men who were hosts last week went up, and we V.A.D.'s took turns in going. Again there was mild tennis, croquet, and clock golf, and there was added fun, for we all had an exciting hunt through the rose-garden for mysteriously hidden presents, one for every member of the gathering. Shotwick was looking its loveliest; it's a big, friendly house, overlooking a broad expanse of lawn, meadow and woods. Sir William* joined us at tea-time, and seemed to enjoy moving around among the men in his wheel-chair. Miss Vernon had thought of everything for our pleasure, and the afternoon was perfect, except for one thing, Colonel Vernon had to be away. This was a great disappointment, and I heard so many of the men speak of missing him. He is a splendid man; besides doing an enormous amount for the hospital and the men, he takes a keen and practical interest in agricultural matters, and has accomplished a great deal in that as in everything that he has ever undertaken. He has an enviable record in the South African war, and raised and trained a line battalion of the King's Liverpool in this war, and is now in the Territorial Reserve.

I spent Sunday's leave with Mrs. Frost, biking over

* Sir William Vernon, Bart., Lord of the Manor of Shotwick and Great Saughall, died June 24, 1919. His long life was full of good works.

late Saturday night after duty. We went to afternoon service in the Cathedral, and it was as ever a joy. . . . In the chancel hangs the battle-scarred flag of the Cruiser "Chester," a mute, glorious reminder of Jack Cornwell, the heroic sixteen-year-old gunner who served his gun alone after all the rest of the gun crew was killed, until he, too, was shot to pieces. . . . Mollington was heavenly — it's a most beautiful place; of course I'm fond of it, for it's like home to me.

June 2.

Think of our flag hanging in St. Paul's! I can hardly realize that these great and glorious days of the new birth of our nation have come. It's summer to-day, in such a lovely world; thank Heaven there is still beauty to be found not too far from the front, for it helps so much.

Last night we had an entertainment for our Smokes Fund; we help it by selling all our waste paper, even torn envelopes and circulars, but it gets low easily. Some of the patients and staff gave an amusing sketch, and a Mrs. Griffiths came out from Chester and sang most awfully well. We have been busy to-day; Mrs. Nicholson and Matron had a great morning in the store-room working in men's kits, and in the midst of getting tea this afternoon we had a flying visit from Dr. Lees, and many telephones all day. This is the life! It's almost ten o'clock, and a perfect evening. The laburnum tree outside my window is a mass of golden blossoms, and delicately fragrant. Everyone is working in gardens these long evenings, for it's not dark at eleven. I think people at home will like daylight-saving when it comes — it's surely wonderful at this time of year. I am hoping for good news of you this week. Life is endlessly busy here; one is deeply occupied, heart and soul, mind and body, but I'm thinking of you always.

June 8.

It is 2.30 on a lovely moonlight night, and I'm sitting in the surgery, taking my time as a watch over Sheehan, who was operated on this morning. He came in the last convoy, minus one leg above the knee. Amputations are done as soon as possible after the wound is received, as in Sheehan's case, but a subsequent operation is often necessary. He has had a bad day, though the last hours have been more comfortable. Oh, the appalling, futile horror of it all! It has to be, but the longer one is in it, the more one is oppressed by the terrible waste of everything, from life downward, and to think of it constantly would drive one mad. We live in a beautiful world here, yet "every butterfly floating down English lanes is a thought of those who lie on the scarred soil of France," and brings home more poignantly the shadow of those who have given their all for us.

Glad as I am that we are in at last, I am sickened at what lies before our Expeditionary Force. All those poor souls, so far from home and their ties, must contend with so many things. Everyone agrees that the fighting is one thing, but the monotony of trench life, and the filth — that's another story. Well, one must not dwell on this, only one is especially grateful for the Red Cross, and all such good works.

I've just had to go in to Sheehan; the effect of his hypodermic is wearing off, and he is suffering terribly. He tries hard not to complain. "Oh, Sister," he said, "this suffering is the will of God, but I wish he would take me." I told him he must n't help to overtax poor St. Peter, and I reminded him what a time the officer in the West Ridings had who carried him the eight hundred yards to safety. "Aye, he should have had the V.C., he should," said poor Sheehan; — but I daresay my talk

is poor listening to when one is in such pain. What a doleful letter; I must tell you of some of my joys. The beautiful country is an endless one; just now the may is in bloom, and pink and white hawthorns and masses of the single white clematis. In the gardens are great mists of forget-me-nots, and columbines in all sorts of lovely colorings, and everywhere roses, roses, just ready to bloom. What shall I do for joy when they all come out? It will be too wonderful.

Yesterday came your nice letter of May 18, and many cuttings and Mamma's paper; you are both so good to send me so much. It was interesting to see that Mr. Gardner had started his military career; he will do a fine job and be happy in it. I am so sorry for your loss, and the world's, in Bela Pratt's death. But what a glorious immortality he has left behind. Your letter gives such a good idea of conditions at home; if only we could have been preparing during these past years. However, it can't be helped now. The sending, provisioning, and ammunitioning of a large expeditionary force and fleet, the handling of immense numbers of wounded and sick — these are questions which perhaps even now are hardly grasped at home, but I hope the right men will be in the right places when we get going.

Helen has just written from Tours. She has been very ill with acute articular rheumatism, and must have suffered greatly, though she makes little of it. She is better now, but all her plans for working this summer are spoiled; I'm so disappointed for her. . . . All the things that were sent me and reached Tours after I left have been distributed. John and May's gift of dressings, cotton, adhesive plaster, gutta-percha tissue, and the ether from Genevieve Bennett, have been given to Descartes; they receive very little, and their need is so great.

Dr. Conant's contributions were divided among 88 bis, Quimper, and Quimperlé. Helen has made lists of each person to be thanked, so I hope they'll all get the letters.

Now I must trot down the ward again and see that Sheehan is O.K. Brown will be wanting a drink of milk and soda, and most likely he'll ask for "the medicine they gave me in France" (morphia). He *had* to have it there, but we have managed to keep him fairly comfortable without it. Also I must wake a man who is having a nightmare, and turn a snorer! Then a look at the Daily Telegraph, and the column, "America at War," which is proud reading nowadays, and after that it will be time for morning work. Night-duty in summer is very nice; one only copes with "feeding the troops" once, there is a great charm about the quiet, and the early dawn is so wonderful; and then the contrast of the happy bustle and hard work from six onwards. The period of dark is very short this week: we have done all our ironing without lighting up, and sometimes we have taken a little table just outside the kitchen door, so between bandages one could sniff the cool, fragrant air, and be refreshed.

5.30 P.M., June 20.

Having spent a quiet and profitable afternoon cleaning lockers in the Vernon Ward, and giving two "blanket baths," I am off for two hours of this lovely day. It seems strange to be back on day-duty, but nice on the whole, though I miss seeing dawn every morning. Heywood has "gone convalescent," and we miss him; Scott and others of the Vimy Ridge convoy have gone, too. Everyone is going on well except Brown, who is not gaining much; my last morning of night-duty I changed his whole bed. It was some achievement, even with help, to move a suffering, helpless patient, who is on a water bed, so I am rather proud of myself.

We had a great day yesterday; the Claytons gave the troops and Staff a wonderful garden party. Unfortunately, it rained, which spoiled bowling and the other sports. However, Mrs. Clayton had thought of that possibility, and as by magic a whist drive was started, with splendid prizes. Then there was music and a scrumptious tea, with strawberries and cream!! It was a most awfully jolly party — all the Claytons are such dears. (Mrs. Clayton's sister nurses at the hospital, too.) And it's a joy to be in their wonderful old house, of which I shall tell you more some day. From the front door one has an enchanting view of the Cathedral towers. You ask about some of the patients. Cariou, the French Canadian, who borrowed my French books and French poetry, has gone; he was a nice child. Little Paget in Vernon walks quite well now, and I think will soon be off. He's a merry little soul, and has a devoted mother, who makes the long trip from Gloucester to see him as often as she can; she brings him many goodies, which he always shares generously with every one. Brown continues to worry us with a very high "temp." every night. Captain Buchanan came up from Fazakerly the other night, to consult with Dr. Lees about him. He was encouraging, thinks that the terrible cough and pain in the chest indicate fluid, and that relief will follow drawing it off. The wounds are horrible, and badly placed in his neck and at the top of his back, but they are clean. Poor little soul, — he's a pathetic bit of human misery, of which there are such hundreds of thousands. I suppose one must feel grateful that he has escaped the shambles alive, yet the long, hard pull back is discouraging. Captain Buchanan's visit was most impressive. We weren't allowed to take off the spreads in the ward he was to be in, until he left, though it was almost nine when he came!

We have all been tremendously stirred by Haig's great success, and enthusiasm in France is immense. It's such a blessing to have the Salient wiped out, for it has cost so many thousands of lives. Men have told me stories of attacks under enfilading fire which sickened me with horror. This advance has been wonderfully prepared and carried out; it's just one more crown for the dauntless British arms. The last air-raid makes one feel that the time for reprisals has come. The Hun is beaten, and he knows it, but he means to give us some very bad moments in his final struggle, which I fear will be a matter of two years. The victory must be complete, even if it takes everything we all have and hope for; nothing else is possible.

IN THE GARDEN, July 6.

I've been as busy as can be this week, for one of the Staff had to go home, and we are full up. Jock has his splint off, and gets carried out into this dear garden on a stretcher, and we wheel Sheehan over in a bath-chair. Last night Nurse Lloyd and I wheeled him up to the bowling-green (another of the Vernons' good deeds for the village). We watched the bowling and Sheehan discoursed to us of life at the front in a most interesting, though at times, horrible, way. Little Brown has made great strides, and is now able to sit up and wash himself.

Wednesday, Fourth of July, our flag hung for the second time with the Union Jack all over London, and one of the lions at Portsmouth Town Hall wore the Stars and Stripes. There was a great fête at a local cricket club here for the benefit of the Jack Cornwell Fund for Disabled Soldiers and Sailors. It was a glorious day; twenty-five men went, and all the Staff who were off duty. We got to the grounds just as the fête opened,

and the band of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers struck up "The Star-Spangled Banner"; there was tremendous applause, and you can't think what a feeling it gave me. We had a very good afternoon, and, as I heard someone say, "There's a fine showing of wounded." There was, indeed; even lots of wounded sailors came up from Liverpool. All of Chester was there, General Pitcairn-Campbell, and an Admiral gave the prizes; there were all sorts of stalls, no end of sports, sack races, plant-pot races, egg-and-spoon races, — from all of which V.I.H. brought back two seconds and a third. Our musical R.A.M.C. and I entered the driving race. "Lady driving blindfolded wounded soldier or sailor around obstacles." We were running well, but the reins broke; however, tea was consoling! Anyway, there was lots of excitement, and it was delightful to see them able to enjoy so much, for some of the brave souls were sadly broken. It was a pretty sight; the beautiful green field, skirted on one side by the Canal, and framed in lovely trees, dotted over with summer frocks, khaki, and hospital blues, and white-capped nurses' uniforms. What a different Fourth from any I have ever spent or imagined. We have had many nice ones together, have n't we? . . .

July 8.

Yesterday Miss Vernon asked Nurse Lloyd and me to come up for some tennis in our off-duty time, and to bring some men for croquet and tea. It was hot, but nice just the same. The hay crop is well in hand, — a big one; our strongest convalescents have been helping with it. We have been lucky in weather, and I hope you will be, too. Thank you for your splendid letter and cuttings, which, as usual, have been read and enjoyed by many.

It's good news to hear that George Hollister* is back safe and sound. His mother must be very happy to have him with her for a little while until he enlists; from what he has said to me, I think he'll choose infantry.

I have finally been able to send Madame Laporte the licorice-bark powder she wanted so much; you know it is *the* great refreshing drink in French military hospitals, and is at present very difficult to obtain in France. Cheers and Hopley, our Hospital chemists in Chester, got twenty pounds for me, and shipped it to Paris, so there is a little more of Fred's money gone. It has been very hot in France, so I am very happy to have started the licorice off. Good-bye for now; the most strenuous hours of the day are coming; washes, rubs, beds made, supper, and special diets. Then our supper, and afterwards special rubs and treatments.

OXFORD,† July 27.

. . . I had such an interesting afternoon Wednesday. Knowing that the bad cases at the Third Southern General Base Hospital (University College, in peace times) depend largely on volunteers to get out in their spinal carriages and bath-chairs, I went around there about 2.30, and found a Mr. Wright (an older college

* George Merrick Hollister, Harvard, 1918, served with the American Ambulance Field Service in France and Serbia from February, 1916, until April, 1917. Awarded the Croix de Guerre in September, 1916, for bravery and devotion to duty during the fighting at Verdun from June 23 to July 21, 1916. Returning to America in 1917, he took a course of intensive training at Harvard, followed by the regular course at the Officers' Training School at Fort Leavenworth, was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Regular Army, assigned to the 61st Infantry, and sent to France in April, 1918. He was killed in action at Bois de Forêt, near Cunel, October 12, 1918, at the age of twenty-two.

† On a short holiday.

dignitary, who gives his spare time to hospital work). He brought me out, as he said, "a very old man," a boy of not quite seventeen, who got very badly smashed up with the Buffs, the East Kent Regiment, in the last days of the Ypres Salient. Baker was a bright, determined little chap, an orphan; the sort that likes to talk war and fighting; so as I wheeled him up University Park, we had a spirited conversation, and I now know all about the best way of getting a bayonet away from a Hun if mine gets broken! I knew something of the history of the fighting, and said to him, "You lost most of your officers early in the game, did n't you?" "Oh, yes," he said, "we all went over the top, each one for himself, that was the worst of it." Oxford ladies serve tea every afternoon in the gardens of Mansfield College, for all the wounded who are out, so we turned up there about 4.30. After seeing that Baker had his tea, Mr. Wright asked me to come and stay with a man whom he had brought, who was out for the first time. He lay in a spinal carriage, a beautiful type of face, finely featured, and very serene, yet he has had to endure everything; there are wounds in his back; he has had gas gangrene, and lost both feet above the ankles. He was with a machine gun company; the same whizz-bang which wounded him killed three and wounded three of the gun's crew, and he is now the only survivor. I talked with him quietly, for a man remains very weak long after such an experience; presently he told me that he was a Nova Scotian. He spoke of Annapolis Valley and Boston, and when I mentioned Boston, U.S.A., it transpired he had often fished from old T Wharf, and had cousins in Brighton and Cambridge. He is absolutely alone in England, and has had no news from home since June, so he enjoyed the talk. In spite of all, he is not down-hearted, — only he thinks he

can't fish again (his former occupation), but must go into his father's business of boat-building. He is twenty-four, by name Nickerson, and he is as fine as anything I have seen here or in France. Afterwards I wheeled Baker through Mesopotamia (a lovely walk along the Cher) and back to the Hospital at 6.30; he was a happy child. Yesterday I took out two more bath-chairs, both Londoners; one a talker, the other a silent soul. The talker had volunteered for a trench-mortar battery, and his talk was very interesting. His contribution to the cause was a leg. This morning I have been wandering a little, watching drilling, sitting in lovely Trinity garden, and buying some old prints, oranges, and a bottle of ink, and wanting to buy much more. In the streets everything is so busy. I passed two companies of cadets on their way to field exercises, carrying their entrenching tools and other equipment, R.F.C. girls on motor-bikes, with side-cars in which they take officers from one duty to another, others driving huge R.F.C. lorries, and girls in long coats, breeches and high boots, going to their work on the land. The Corn Market has never seen more traffic than now, and how different from other days! Mrs. Bevan, my dear landlady, and I have long talks in the evenings: many a boy sleeps forever in France who slept in the room where I am sleeping now. She speaks with especial affection of a young Irishman named Anderson who won his Blue in featherweight boxing. Poor lad! He has won his eternal Blue now. Thursday, I went up the river as far as Wallingford, where I found the Stars and Stripes floating over the boathouse. . . . It was all lovely beyond description. Coming back to Oxford was a dream. It was like a heavenly vision — those spires and towers, "aspiring sweetly" from the green. . . .

WAKEFIELD, August 14.

Our week of nights finished successfully, barring usual stoking troubles. Nurse Lloyd is fine to work with, and Night-Sister turned out well. Here I am on days again, and such a day as we have had to-day. Nine stretcher and five sitting cases came in just after midnight, so I found great changes in the ward this morning. There are some very bad wounds, and two or three medical cases. (One is a splendid big chap in the Coldstream Guards.) But general happiness pervades them all, because of being not only back in Blighty, but in a Red Cross Hospital. "Why, Sister, I think I could do with this for the duration," said one to me while I was cutting up his dinner. "To think of my luck to get in such a place," said another. I've heard a lot about the fighting now going on; a man who has been through the whole war thinks he has never seen such artillery fire as in the present campaign. "And we've had such rain, Sister; it's terrible work trying to move artillery!" There has been too much rain here for the good of the crops — the water fell in torrents all last night, and this morning we had a tremendous thunderstorm as well. Then the sun came out, and it grew hotter and hotter; visitors came, the boiler went back on us, there were an unusually large number of collars and ties to be washed for the week, and Dr. Elliott, our consulting medical man, took this morning to come and see poor St. Lo, who is in very bad shape. Altogether, a stiff morning. St. Lo is able to retain nothing now, liquid or solid, and his bed is a great care. I expect he'll be moved into the War Hospital; he will be more in place in a medical ward, for he needs constant attention, and our Staff is not large enough to give him as much time as he should have. Gray was walking with a cane this morning; Brown is really

"chirpy"; but Willans, a very bad medical case, makes no progress.

It's raining again, and our black cat, Mickey, has come in, all wet, through the French window. The thrushes have stopped singing and gone to bed, but the garden is lovely, even in the rain. I must stop now, for it's time for the troop's supper. It's such fun feeding the new ones, for they're so happy and thrilled at being clean and back in Blighty, away from that indescribable din. One can have no idea how intense their appreciation is unless one has seen and heard them.

August 18.

To-day is a regular mountain day, bright sun and cool winds, after three showery days and heavy rain last night. We are full up, and very busy, as we are one short for this week. The new cases are coming on well. A man named Lecomber is one of the worst; wounded at Ypres by shrapnel, which rent his whole left side from ear to toe, but he is as plucky as they always are. Gunner Harris, in the Vernon Ward, told me this morning that he was with the Cunard Line for years, knew the "Etruria," and has crossed to Boston on the "Ivernia." It was odd to be talking with him about Revere Beach, which he remembered very well! Matron comes home from her holiday to-day; we have missed her, though Mrs. Manley, our temporary matron has done splendidly and we've all liked her. She is matron of a boys' school, and coming here to work is her vacation, as part of her war work. She has lost her son in the war.

We had a splendid afternoon Thursday. Mr. Jackson, our Quartermaster's brother, came up from Birkenhead with some convalescent Tommies, and gave us a concert. He has a splendid voice himself, and plays delightfully,

and does a lot of it for hospitals everywhere, besides being B.R.C.S. Transport Officer in Birkenhead. He sang such a pretty second part to "When I Wore a Tulip." One of the men sang a rather grim parody on "If You Were the Only Girl," which began,—

> "If you were the only Boche in a trench,
> And I had the only bomb,

— you can imagine what it was like!

The post is just in, bringing me many letters from you both, and cuttings. Thank you for everything, and for news of so many people. . . . My eyes filled as I read the Herald editorial about the parade. So many men who marched through Boston that day will never come back! The world is going to be rudely changed for us at home, as it has been for so many people here, already.

August 19.

The heavy rains continue, and the lowlands below the ridge on which our village lies, are flooded. Crops are suffering, for strong winds are doing damage besides. The glass has been lower this week than in any August for thirty-eight years. The country is very beautiful, having still the look of early summer except for the crops and the late summer flowers, which are coming into their own. I saw our own goldenrod against masses of purple clematis in one garden to-day. It's a lovely combination, but I love the roses best, and they bloom as richly as ever. We're having delicious plums and nectarines now, and the apple trees are heavy with fruit; it's a luscious month. Mrs. Williamson continues to spoil me, and only rarely do I have a chance to spoil her. Last night I was off at seven, so I had a chance to sing for her and Mr. Williamson. They both love music.

1 A.M., August 24.

Many thanks for The Nation, and Simonds's article, which was very interesting. He surely has a keen grasp of the situation, and the power of bringing it home to others. Your letter of August 2 is a joy; it's good to think of you all at Rest Harrow. My love to the friends at the Peak, and the more distant neighbors. . . . Here we are always busy; Mary and I have been both washing and ironing to-night, as the Day-Staff are so rushed they do not get around to washing the bandages and slings. She's just starting porridge for breakfast, so I can write to you. Nights seem longer now; we find the gas lighted when we come on duty, and we can't do without it until after six. One hates to think the end of this lovely season is near. . . . Brown is doing so well now, — the two months have done wonders for him, though he still coughs and cannot straighten his neck. I see we are to begin Casualty Lists at home next week, so I expect there is a sizeable body of troops over already. I wonder where General Glenn is? He will have a division, of course.*

Yesterday was kipper morning, and a horrid washing-up job it makes. Perhaps to compensate, the talk was unusually interesting among the "Kitchen Staff." Our R.F.C. corporal, Crack, talked a lot about flying, — always a fascinating subject. He said the average flying life for R.F.C. officers is eighty hours. After hearing that, one no longers wonders at the endless number of R.F.C. cadets.

Mrs. Frost has asked us to dine there Saturday before duty; Sunday will be my last night on with Mary. We have had such a nice week together. . . . And it's

* Maj. Gen. E. F. Glenn went to France in 1918 in command of the 83rd Division.

been heavenly living in her wonderful old house. The light's too bad to write any more, and it's working time, anyway.

September 12.

There's an autumnal wind to-day, and dark scurrying clouds. I've just been walking in our beloved Shotwick woods, thinking of the delight of those long sweet summer evenings, when after the day's work was done, one used to be able to go walking in the evening between nine and ten, and watch the rabbits playing. I am back on days again; it seems a strange noisy world, after three weeks of night-duty. Monday was my change day, and I had such a beautiful holiday. . . . I wish you had been here last night to hear Corporal Sheehan and me sing "Convent Bells"; it's an old-fashioned duet, but it makes a hit! Sheehan has a splendid tenor, and adores singing. He's getting about on crutches wonderfully now. A V.C. captain came to see the hospital the other day; he had lost an arm, and had a long talk with Sheehan, deciding which of the two was better off. They concluded that things were best as they were, for Sheehan felt he needed two arms more than he needed two legs, while the captain felt he'd rather spare the arm.

Staff-Nurse is on her holiday; Miss Godwin, who has come from Staffordshire to take her place, is not only a splendid V.A.D. and awfully nice, but an excellent musician as well, which means so much. Miss Aked is home on leave with a bad arm, and has asked me to spend a week-end with her at Hellifield; I am sorry I can't manage it, for I should like to see her again. This morning came a splendid letter from Gladys Winterbottom, with her picture. She looks very well in her uniform.

September 20.

Yesterday afternoon I sent off some money to Pierre and François; the latter has never fully recovered his sight. I used Aunt Hepsie's fund; Susie's, Charlotte Cummin's, and Cousin Eliza's money I am keeping for Christmas.

The new ward is in use; we can take care of fifty-four patients now. It's a sunny, quiet place, fragrant with the scent of the heliotrope, which borders the veranda. Sister Jock has been on her holiday. We had Sister Pritchard in her place. She was especially keen on medical cases, and taught me so much. Evans, who is now almost the oldest resident of V.I.H. in my time, presented me with a mince-tart this morning! He is having a discouraging time; his wound did not seem serious, yet we can't get it well. He is a great thinker, and always so evenly good-humored. We have had many talks during these months.

I had the joy of a letter from Marraine this morning, and just now comes one from Winifred; an American mail must be in. . . .

11.30 P.M., September 26.

. . . Mary and I are sitting in the kitchen, waiting for the ambulances, for we are getting twenty cases to-night. It's a perfect moonlight night; how glad all these poor children will be to see the moon shining in Blighty again. This last advance is magnificent, and casualties are light, but even so, there are enough. Changing from day to night, I had Monday free; I walked into Chester in the morning, and round the walls, and sat for a while reading in Grosvenor Park. Do you remember those lovely gardens? High above the Dee they lie, full of beautiful old trees and splendid

holly; the paths wind just right and lead one to sandstone steps and welcoming benches, where one might sit and dream whole days like these away. It was lovely, so different from the horror which is now the background of our lives. Here they are; no more now.

4.30, September 27.

All the new men are in bed, many asleep; all washed and fed (tea, bread and "maggie"*). Their clothing has been sorted and tagged, field dressing-station cards and medical sheets are in order, bandages and slings have been put to soak, cups and saucers and plates are washed up, fires are stoked, and our own meals eaten; now Mary and I have half an hour before starting morning work. They got in at 12.45; first came two open motors (belonging to people who thus do national service); from them sixteen strangers in khaki filtered into the kitchen. Little by little the sixteen were divested of their great-coats, trifles like metal body-shields were put aside, tea was drunk, while conversation waxed constant and interesting, though quiet. At one end of the table sat two Canadian Indians; I heard one explaining in careful English to a Cockney neighbor that he was *not* an Indian from India, and that his name was Black Face. Then the ambulance came, and the stretcher cases were brought in. Drummond and Brown and two other men got up to give us a hand with them, and Brown stayed up to help the tub bathers. They are a nice lot of men, and as usual, full of appreciation, and anxious to give a helping hand even if they only have one. Most of the walking cases had not been in hospital long, and were a muddy lot; some unshorn faces, too, though Brown confided to me that they were a very clean lot under

* Colloquial name for oleomargarine.

their clothes, which means that they can't have been in trenches long. Two of the stretcher cases are bad; one, an Irish boy in a Scotch regiment, has *terrible* wounds of thigh and leg and heel; another man has a hideous wound across his whole middle back. It looks serious, though he makes nothing of it. Of course the gas gave out at a critical moment, and candles, lamps and lanterns became the order of the night. We can scarcely realize that we shall serve breakfast to forty-two instead of twenty-two this morning. Dear, brave, patient souls, I am glad they are out of that inferno for a time, at least. It was never more worthy of the name than now. Outside the cocks are crowing; another lovely day has begun, and our work must begin, too.

October 4.

Thanks so much for the copy of the Harvard Bulletin, with the list of Harvard men in the war. Thank J——, too, for some illustrated papers which came in the same post; I enjoyed them greatly, and they are going the rounds of the wards now. I am still on nights; in Thornycroft, this week. It's even harder than before, waking the troops, for since we have been rationed on tea, no more morning tea! Coffee for breakfast and cocoa for supper make more of a hit than we dared hope. We heard when we came on duty to-night that there had been an inspection this afternoon; lots of men were marked out for convalescence. Corporal Willans is to go to the medical ward of the War Hospital; I am sorry he is going, for his wife and child are so comfortably settled in the village, and he is happy here. But there is hardly any hope for him, and he would be quieter there for the end. The weather has gone bad these last days; it has been chilly and rainy, but it is turning back

again to-night. I took a walk when I woke up this afternoon, and coming home by the Parkgate road, I passed a garden with sweet peas in bloom, and there are still lots of roses. The troops are very wakeful to-night, so you will forgive a scrappy letter. It is constantly interrupted by ward duties, — glasses of hot milk, barley water, coal on the fires, and other things. One of the new men, Corporal Jones, has a temp. of 104° and a pain which seems like pleurisy; he is very uncomfortable. So is McLenahan, who came in the same convoy; he has twenty-two stitches in his side, and a horrid wound on his ankle. He's a merry soul from County Down; of course he is called Paddy. He thinks Sydney, Mary and I are extra because we've got *some* Irish blood! Corporal Wells lies very near him; he has a gun-shot wound in his side, which was taken care of in Camiers by an American doctor! Wells is awake now, and Freeman, too; he is a young Cambridgeshire farmer, who has a hideous shell wound of the arm and hand. We hope to save the hand and all the fingers, but his dressing is torture. The Indians are making good progress, but "Tanks" (so our Tank driver is called) is having a bad time with his hand, and I expect a finger will have to come off. Lecomber's wound, after many fomentations and a fresh incision, has yielded up a piece of shrapnel about half an inch thick and a little less in length; he'll get well now.

October 7.

A wild wind is howling around the hospital to-night, and I am sitting by the fire in Thornycroft, watching Willans, who has had a bad turn with his heart. The ward is quiet, no snoring, but occasional groans; up in the gallery, Brown is fighting battles again. "Yes, sir,"

he says, very briskly and distinctly. Then various remarks about his gun (he was in the machine gun company). A ward at night is a strange, remote world, and one is inclined to think it is the only one. I hear Nurse Piggin struggling with the fires; she is a bit cast down, having all the responsibility of the fires and porridge, but Sister wants me here. My helper this week is a very good one, — a man in the Inniskilling Fusiliers, who was valet to an A.D.C. at the Durbar. He likes to talk about the trip, and said it was grand, only he did n't get on well with the King's valet! V.I.H. feels very classy just now, as we have five corporals in this ward and two corporals besides a lance-corporal in Vernon! Our Indians are getting more pally, and walk together and sit next each other at meals. They are a striking pair, and give one much to think about. When we came on duty to-night, we heard all about the operation to-day from a Tommy who had *his* operation in France. He was pitying to-day's patient because he was given no breakfast. "I was n't nothing like him, Nurse," said Private Bloomer, "I took a good breakfast and a fag; then I gets on a table and counts up to twenty-three and nappoo." Fancy results for the existing staff when he came out of ether! You ask about Hyland. He has been gone some time, and is doing well at a convalescent hospital. He is still on crutches, but that he recovered at all is miraculous, for he was very ill, and his wound in bad shape. "I expected to leave a leg behind me here," he told me grimly, the day he left. Fourteen men have gone this week, Bedford among others; he was such a great little helper, and so sane and interesting in his thought and talk of the war. Walbank has gone, too, — a splendid chap; twice exempted as a munition worker, he insisted on joining up eventually. Jock has gone; though he was

hard to manage at times, "with all his faults, we love him still," and we miss him. Our Coldstream Guardsman, convalescing from pneumonia, has a splendid record, out with B.E.F. since August 13, 1914, three times wounded, and now almost the only man left of his original battalion. I got up early to-night to play for a sing-song; it was a good one, for we have lately had an acquisition in Driver Reed, R.F.A., who has a lovely tenor. Of course we had "Keep the Home Fires Burning" and "Pack Up Your Troubles"!

October 8.

Five o'clock, and the loveliest hour of a glorious day. We have just finished tea, and I'm off until seven; the garden is beautiful to-night; it's been a joy to us all so often. The troops have had a happy day; three of the new men have been lifted, beds and all, into the court-yard, Corporal Willans has been out in the bath-chair with his wife and children walking beside him, and Smart to wheel him. Corporal Wilsher has been unsteadily but happily walking about for the first time, and Lecomber is getting about a little with a cane. In the wards there have been long naps, varied by war talk and the gramophone; in Vernon, Gardner has been keeping everyone amused by foolish talk, for he is a confirmed joker, in spite of three years of fighting, two Blighty wounds, and his present bad arm. And when they are all tired of laughing, Corporal Gill is listened to with interest, for he's the only man from the Tanks we've had all summer. The Indians are doing well, but they live in a world of their own, and hold little converse with each other or anyone else. There is a legend that Black Face smiled once when a paper accidentally dropped in his face while I was dusting a window ledge over his bed. We had a

concert party out from Chester last night; you would have laughed to see me shepherding my somewhat unsteady flock into Thornycroft. They were all as bright-eyed as children at a surprise party. I was off at seven, and as the day had been hard, I did n't stay for the show, but I heard from them all that they had a splendid time. St. Lo is dead; poor soul, I 'm glad for his sake. He was surely true blue to enlist from Canada at forty-six. Webb was in Chester yesterday, and told me that he saw an American sailor; he seemed very thrilled. Webb came in from Vimy Ridge, but he still gets no use from his arm. He comes from Hampshire, and likes to hear about New Hampshire. From all I hear, our men have made a great impression, both here and in France, in both services, as a body and personally. Time 's up, and I must carry over the cheese for the troops' supper.

October 11.

This morning came two letters from Mamma; she is good to write so often. Thank J—— for his fine letter, which I greatly enjoyed. The weather continues changeable, but the early mornings are lovely and the nights beautiful. Just after dark the anti-aircraft stations' searchlights begin to play over the sky; they are very powerful, and it 's quite a sight. We are very well protected here, for it is necessary. It is rather sad walking home to Wakefield in the dark, and realizing that the warm, scented summer nights are over; how delicious they were, and what a lovely memory this spring and summer will always be. We are having an agitated week at the hospital; a great many men are going convalescent, which means many beds to carbolize, blankets, mattresses and pillows to beat, and lockers to scrub. Corporal Willans was moved to the War Hospital Tuesday. It was

a horrid blustery afternoon, and we were all so depressed. Sister Jock stood by and was cheero until he was comfortably settled in the ambulance; then she retreated into the surgery and burst into tears — I had not thought she would feel it so much. He died this morning; since the end came so soon, I wish he might have been left here. We can't realize he has taken the big trip. It's so hard for his wife, for they were a rarely devoted couple.

I was talking with one of our new men, Purdy, at tea-times, about Poelcappelle, where his arm was all shot to pieces. "You know, Nurse, I was awfully glad to get this, for it saved me. I've been over the top twice before, but this was the worst. He knew we were coming, and he had his barrage going twenty minutes before we came, and his machine-gun fire was something awful." (We all speak of the Huns as "he"). We have a big gunner in now, who was gassed and is almost voiceless. Last night he was very uncomfortable, but he had been sent some sweets, and as I passed his bed, I heard a hoarse whisper of, "Sister," and turned to find him holding out his box of chocolates for me to take some. The men are always so pleased when they have something to offer one. "Tanks's" finger is coming off to-morrow; we have tried hard to save it, but it's no use.

Living conditions are getting worse every week. Butter is 2/10 a pound, eggs threepence half-penny each, and both of these, like milk, very scarce. Even the supply of "maggie" is low, and we get only three-quarters of a pound for seven loaves of bread. Bacon is scarce and dear, so we almost never have it now. Last week matches and candles both gave out in Eastham, so everyone went to bed with the chickens. The fruit harvest is huge, however; one can buy twelve pounds of damsons for ninepence, and they are so good.

We are all very happy at V.I.H., for Matron is to have the Royal Red Cross, and she deserves it. Sister Jock has been "mentioned in dispatches," so honors are crowding thickly upon us. Matron will go up to London, and the King will pin the decoration on her. It will be *some* day for her. I am so glad that this has come to her, for she's such a true patriot about rations and such things.

October 13.

We had a rush to-day; men leaving and men coming. Also a transfer to Chester War Hospital which I was detailed to accompany in the ambulance. We went in at 4.30; the air was delicious and the run in was a pleasure. The War Hospital stands in an unattractive part of Chester, but the buildings are excellent and there is a big garden. It was formerly the Workhouse, but has been remodeled and can take care of seven hundred and fifty patients. While we were waiting with our patients in the office for necessary formalities to be accomplished, a man in Uncle Sam's uniform came in. When he had finished talking with Butcher, our patient, Butcher said, "Beg pardon, sir, but Nurse here comes from America, too." I think the young M.D. was very surprised. He asked me how long I had been over, and said he was one of three men from the University of Chicago who came over a month ago. They are filling the places of three men who have gone to France. He seemed a nice chap, looked well in his lieutenant's uniform, and his name was Larkin. "Well, good-bye, glad to have met you; I guess you're as glad to be over working as I am," he said as he went out. Chester was enchanting, as we ran through on our way home. We picked up Webb and Gardner, who had been in on pass. The streets were crowded and busy, as it was market day, and everyone was out, and as happy as one

can be nowadays. Lights twinkled, Staff Officers swanked about, and Kilties gave a touch of color, appearing a moment to vanish again in the gloom of the Rows. Chester is a dear place, and I've grown very fond of it. . . . Red Cross Week has been a great success; the contribution from U.S. is much appreciated. It seems a lot of money, but it is small compared to the need. Everything is going on well. Matron says she must get a bill through forbidding me to leave "for the duration," for we keep so busy, and V.A.D.'s are scarce.

October 17.

Eight stretcher and four sitting cases came in Thursday evening; I was off duty before they came, but it was quite a rush getting ready for them. Four convalescents were moved into the new ward, others shifted to the gallery, and the usual preparations for a convoy, besides the evening routine made my last hour very busy. The new cases are bad; an amputation, and a man with a terrible leg, and a horrible case of mustard gas and liquid fire burns. I was on dinners their first day, and blessed the "Tank," a wonderful white contrivance on wheels with a Red Cross on the front, which takes twelve dinners at a time; as there were twenty-three men in bed, you can imagine what a help the "Tank" is, especially in bad weather. It's another of Colonel Vernon's gifts to the hospital. The men are coming on well; just being in England seems to help so much.

Sydney has gone home for two weeks' holiday. I saw her off yesterday, and shall miss her. We saw two American sailors from the "Dixie" in the station; I tried to speak to them, but they were off before I had a chance. Afterwards I walked out to Mrs. Frost's; she was having a concert for the Red Cross, with tea and a half-crown

collection. The walk out was lovely; the country is still very green — there are hardly any leaves off, and the air is so soft. The concert was a great success; there were about a hundred people, and beautiful music, — Mrs. Morice, who plays the piano awfully well, and a young violinist, besides Mr. Jackson, of whom I have written you, and a lady from Birkenhead, with a glorious voice. I sang two Irish songs; it's a wonderful room to sing in. Mrs. Frost looked beautifully.

Clovis complains of horrid weather in Lyons, where his squadron now is. I hope he will see Madame Dangés. Linda is working hard at a canteen in Paris. Things are going well at the front, though the end is still far off. *Everyone* on the Staff has a cold; Mrs. Williamson has one, too, and I've tried to take care of her, but she works so hard that she's a difficult patient. They are all so plucky about carrying on.

October 25.

I have had a long afternoon off, and a glorious one. First, a walk around Shotwick, and the lovely old church; then back by the Parkgate road to Mrs. Nicholson's. She was sorting potatoes with her "woman on the land"; I joined her, and we had great fun working until tea-time. She has two delightful Scotch terriers, who helped in their fashion. . . . Coming home, I stopped at the post office for letters; a Tommy was talking with a friend. "Is there many American chaps now in France?" asked the friend. "Oh, aye, there's lots of them, and fine, big, smart chaps they be, too," said Tommy. As he didn't know me, his remarks were a special pleasure. I found many letters; a splendid one from Leslie, and one from Leila, too. . . . It's strange to think of life at home; so much drops away from one here.

October 27.

We have had an eventful day, for Duchess Katharine came to open the new ward and operating-room this morning. We were instructed to have on clean aprons and cuffs by eleven; otherwise to carry on as usual. So I was washing tea towels when the big car bearing the B.R.C.S. insignia rolled into the courtyard. Mrs. Frost, Mrs. Nicholson, Miss Vernon, and Matron, with Colonel Vernon and Dr. Lees, received the Duchess, and they all disappeared into the hospital. Presently Staff-Nurse came out to tell us that she had just been presented, and that the Duchess, hearing there was an American V.A.D. on the Staff, had asked to have her presented. The party passed through the kitchen in a little while, followed by all the men who were up and able to walk, and the Staff, which I joined. While everyone was filing into the new ward, the presentation came off. Mrs. Frost said, "Your Grace, may I present our American V.A.D., Nurse ——." The Duchess shook hands, and I curtsied; she spoke very graciously, and said a good deal about the American doctors now in England, — what splendid ideas they had, and how adaptable they were. She said that Robert Jones had said to her just lately that there was nothing for him to teach them. I think she must be as good as she is beautiful. After this, we went into the new ward, and Colonel Vernon made a short speech, offering the building to the B.R.C.S. "for the duration." Then the Duchess accepted the gift for B.R.C.S., at the same time congratulating Matron and Sister on their honors, and finding other pleasant things to say; she has a lovely voice and a perfect manner, and it's always a pleasure to look at her. Finally, Mrs. Frost moved a vote of thanks to the Duchess for coming, the men gave lots of cheers for the Duchess, and Colonel Vernon, and

everyone! Then the Duchess left, and work resumed its normal course. The ward is to be called the Katharine Ward; Westminster would n't necessarily imply Duchess Katharine, and besides, V.I.H. says, "It will be a reminder of the American V.A.D."

We had such a nice service Sunday. Mr. Wandsborough was the clergyman, and the hymns went especially well. We sing, "O God, our help in ages past" almost every Sunday; what a big hymn it is. One of the men did n't come to attention quite as smartly as he might have for "God Save the King"; he was standing near Bedworth (our amputation case), who was enraged, and called out afterwards, "Young man, if you can't come to attention proper for 'God Save the King,' go and stand where I can't see you!" The "young man" is at least fifteen years older than Bedworth, but as he is in a labor battalion, he is n't quite so soldierly as he might be; he 's a very nice soul, though, and won't offend again, I'm sure! Thursday we had a visit from a captain of the Grenadier Guards. He had met our corporal from that regiment in Chester, and came out to see him, to Corporal Roberts's great joy. The captain is on a detail of lecturing to convalescent officers at Eton and Hawarden. Mrs. Frost happened to be at the hospital, so took him around everywhere. He came in a Hupmobile; one sees quite a few about, for British manufacturers are not making pleasure cars. Petrol economy is becoming greater daily; private individuals can't use it at all, and many taxis and delivery motors are running by coal gas. It 's an odd sight to meet a Ford topped by a huge balloon-shaped contrivance full of gas. I must leave you now, as it 's time for the troops' supper. It has been such a lovely day, not a breath of wind, and soft in spite of the snow we saw this morning on the highest hills.

Sheehan and Brown have gone, and the latter writes that he is coming to make us a call on his furlough.

November 15.

Sydney and I have just come on duty; we had a wild walk of wind and rain, but the stars are coming out now. We were very busy last night at ironing and mending, but to-night we are comparatively peaceful. The new boiler is in; it's a comfort, though fires still take lots of time, as we are having an unusually bad run of coal. It's always nice being on with Sydney; she is so good at everything, and remains undaunted by the most untoward events. We get on well at Wakefield, too, which is lucky. She loves music, and I wish there were more time for it. She has lost one brother in the war; he must have been an extraordinarily fine chap. He was only thirty-two when he was killed, and already a brigade major. Two other brothers are serving, and the youngest training.

Everyone is going on well. Burns, our Scotch R.A.M.C. orderly, who came to us in such frightful condition from mustard gas, is up, but Clark, a Canadian gunner, also terribly burned, is still in bad shape, though his voice is beginning to come back. Black Face left this morning before breakfast for Epsom, the Canadian convalescent camp, and flashed us all a bright parting smile. Corporal Wilsher is now our ranking N.C.O., firm but pleasant in the exercise of his authority; he 's a nice chap, a Kentish farmer, twenty-three. We are getting in four stretcher cases to-night, but all is quiet so far, so I'll go on. Last night was the anniversary of the opening of the hospital in 1914; Miss Vernon and the Colonel gave a whist drive in Thornycroft for patients, Staff, ambulance drivers and other helpers. There were such jolly prizes, cigarette cases, canes, and electric torches; afterwards

came tea, coffee, sandwiches, and war-cake. Colonel Vernon and Mrs. Frost spoke, and Gunner Harris spoke on behalf of the men; he has a real social gift. Colonel Vernon presented all the new V.A.D.'s with the hospital pin, such as the rest of the Staff wear already for service during '14, '15, and '16. They are very good looking; I shall always be proud of mine, for it stands for a great deal. It was a splendid evening, and "God Save the King" brought the end all too soon; by twelve, all was serene, and we at work. We gave the troops half an hour extra this morning, and they repaid us nobly, for breakfast was on time, just the same. Here's the ambulance; more later.

2.20, November 16.

All four have had tea, and had blanket baths, and before I start morning porridge, I'll finish. There's one trench-fever case, one gassed man, one bad wound of the side, and a fractured clavicle. Two are Australians, one is a Canadian, and one a Welshman. They are all asleep now, and hardly anyone in the ward woke up while we were busy with them; great luck! Lecomber goes convalescent to-morrow, and we are getting three more cases in the morning. The gas is dimmer and dimmer, and it is stopping time, anyway. It's turned out a lovely night, but I miss the summer dawns.

November 18.

Though we are on night-duty, we got up this afternoon for the anniversary service at the church, and how glad we are that we did. Mr. Blackbourne, who preached, is an Army Chaplain, and if there are many like him, the Church must have meant a great deal to the fighting man. He was so simple, so sincere, and he spoke of such big

things. The whole service was very impressive; all the men who were able to walk were there, most of the detachment; Mrs. Frost and Mrs. Nicholson sat in front of us, and the Vernons in their pew. It was wonderful how quiet the men kept, no fidgeting or coughing. "I could listen to such a one forever," one man said to me, walking home. Mr. Blackbourne is now Assistant Chaplain of the Western Command, but he has seen plenty of field service. Jones, who takes care of our fires night and morning and removes the ashes, is Verger at the Church, and was in his glory to-day, fluttering about in his dignified robe.

November 24.

We are having a busy week; I'm back on days, and there are lots of big dressings. Bedworth's stump is in bad shape, and a little chap named Whiting has a dreadful head, all shot to pieces. His dressing takes nearly an hour, and is terrible agony for him, though he bears it heroically. The gassed patients are coming on, but it's a frightful business. Wednesday we had two ops.; Dr. Lees removed more of King's two middle finger stumps, so as to give him a more practicable hand. (King is the half-breed Indian.) Then Reilly's arm was opened up again; it has never gone on well. Nurse Taylor and I were on dressings. Some push, as we had to be all cleaned up after them and ready for Dr. Lees at 12.15. Dr. Sutton etherized; King took it like a lamb, came out quietly, was quite himself five minutes after he was back in bed, and asking me what time it was. We had a bad time with Reilly, though; he was hard to get under, and very slow to come out. I was alone with him when he began to come out, and what a time I had trying to keep him on the table. Before the end, Sydney, three men and I were

all struggling with him. I can imagine now what Scotchmen are like when they are fighting, for Reilly went through a battle for us. It was tremendously stirring to feel the mighty passion of fighting surge through him. He talked of fixing his bayonet, advanced in a charge, calling, "Black Watch forever! Mons! Mons! The Black Watch, the pride of the British Army! I want to kill more Germans!" He fought us like a demon, and we all got some knocks. I expect he heard of his doings from the men, for the next morning when I was dusting his bed, he shyly produced a German penny. "Take it, please, Nurse, I got it off a dead German in Belgium. I'm thinking I was over-rough with you yesterday, and I'm sorry." *Amende honorable!* That surely was a day; Staff-Nurse and I were nearly all in, but the good news from Cambrai, and the afternoon post, besides a present of real butter and eggs from Nurse Taylor, did much to revive our fainting spirits.

Gunner Harris and the rest of the Katharine Ward went quite mad after tea this afternoon. They had unearthed somewhere an old lantern, which Harris fastened to a pole; he carried this at the head of a procession, which marched in and out of the wards and the kitchen and the courtyard, stopping under Matron's window for a special sing of the carols with which we had all been regaled! It was rather absurd, yet the Christmas carols sounded very sweet, and I think tears were not far from mingling with some of the men's laughter.

November 28.

A beautiful clear moonlight night, and a warm west wind, bringing sulphurous fumes from the valley. Alas, that such moonlight only suggests to us air-raids on London! Nurse Minshull and I are just settling down after

getting in four stretcher cases from a train of six hundred. Carmichael, a famous V.C., was on the train; Sister Jock will be disappointed not to have her countryman here. The gas went out just as the ambulance got in, so we have been working with candles and a lantern again, — rather a nuisance. The men got here about ten, and as the ward was not all asleep, there was much chaffing and curiosity. I took care of a young sergeant named Elliott, who was terribly burned and temporarily blinded at Passchendaele. He was a mass of blisters, but cheerful just the same, and full of talk about Fritz's eight-inch shells and the fighting he had been through. When we were ready to leave the ward, Bedworth started his good-nights. "Good-night, Australia. Same to you, Canada. *Bon soir*, Tobey. See you in the morning, Paddy. Good-night everyone up there" (this to the gallery). As this always provokes rejoinders, it's a long business. . . . I got up in time to take a walk before sunset; it was lovely, — sweet air, roses blooming everywhere, and wallflowers, too. The sunset was heavenly, — a brilliant rose-color, and great white clouds banked over the hills, glowing to rose and gold, and in the east, the moon rising triumphantly. It's such a beautiful world that is being spoiled. I shall go out and post this now; it's still dark, and mysterious shapes on well-lighted bicycles will pass me with a "Good morning, Nurse" as they go on their way to work in the munition factories.

December 3.

We've just had our monthly fire drill, which is amusing, but satisfactory, and now the rest of this lovely balmy afternoon is mine. It has been a tiresome day; many small vexations, and a long visit from Dr. Lees,

in a charming but distracted mood. Also, we have an X-Ray party on to-night, which means a late evening. But now I am looking down a long garden path, listening to the thrushes and robins, and thinking how well this garden has companioned me these many months, so nearly over. . . . General Pitcairn-Campbell was here for inspection Saturday, and I hear he was very pleased. Colonel Vernon is delighted with something he heard in Chester the other day. Two medical "brass hats," in talking about the hospitals in this command, said that V.I.H. really couldn't be beaten for cleanliness and general upkeep. It is rather nice to have Matron's ideals and efforts appreciated.

The men are getting on well, though the gassed patients make slow progress. Elliott has had a visit from his mother, who is herself a part-time V.A.D. Bedworth is better, but Whiting's head still takes three-quarters of an hour to dress. Evans's pretty wife has been to see him again from Shrewsbury. Even with that, though, he finds seventeen weeks in bed a long pull. "Oh, Nurse, I'm fed up," he said this morning, while I was doing his dressing. "What with? Your leg?" said I. "No, but the war, and everything," he said. I told him I was, too, and that we'd make a bargain, — that if he would stop feeling fed up, I would.

December 11.

Another bright, mild day. I am back at work again after five perfect days at Harewood. You will have heard from me there; how delightful it was, and how dear the Godwins were to me. I enjoyed being with them immensely, and it was a joy to know the country; it's so big and free and beautiful, — such a country to ride over. . . . Everything at V.I.H. is as usual, and the men are doing

well. Harris has heard definitely that his brother is killed; it will be very hard on the father. *He* is doing his bit by giving concerts in camps and hospitals, and all his boys are serving. How soon will it be so in our families? It can't be too soon; we need so many, many men, — nothing else can end it. What a terrible calamity that is at Halifax. It is dreadful that such a catastrophe should have come upon a world already sorely tried. It's awful to think of all those poor suffering creatures.

Yesterday I had a letter marked "Secret" from the steamship people. The die is cast. I've taken passage in the boat that brought me over. I shall cable you the date later. I am so glad, and yet so sad to-night. . . .

December 16.

Such days of perfect soft weather after a frost. Roses are coming strong for Christmas, and there is a second blooming of primroses. The birds still sing with all their hearts, and even darkest mornings their brave little songs encourage one to get up, though sometimes it's almost a question of

> "In winter I get up at night
> And dress by yellow candle-light."

Leslie's precious Red Cross box has finally arrived, is unpacked, and everything marked with the V.I.H. stamp, which I sewed on in dozens. There were two dozen each of helpless shirts, flannel pajamas, flannel convalescent robes, and flannel night-shirts, besides helmets, wristers, sweaters, little pillows, and remnants of cotton flannel and calico — most valuable here, where every scrap of everything counts. The box was beautifully packed, and all the garments so well made and finished; they are greatly admired, and are especially welcome, for B.R.C.S.

has to fill so many demands, and our supply of warm pajamas and night-shirts was very low. Miss Vernon, who is Acting Commandant in Mrs. Frost's absence, has written to Leslie and to the American Red Cross; I hope the letters will get there all right. We are losing many men, and shall soon have a new family in. Capewell, who has lately been our right hand in the kitchen, left this evening. He looked stunning in his khaki; we shall miss him, for he is as nice a boy as ever was. This last offensive has been costly, and these are not cheerful days. Yesterday there were memorial services in London and all over England for the First Seven Divisions. There was a service in the Cathedral here especially to commemorate the fallen of the Cheshire Regiment. I should have liked to go, yet it would have been hard to bear. I was in town to send off Christmas money from the rest of my fund to all my children in France, and found Chester very crowded, but very sad. I walked out to Mrs. Hutchinson's for tea. She is a delightful person I met at the Claytons. . . . This was my first good-bye; I can't realize the end is so near.

December 19.

This morning I woke to lovely clear blue skies, and little golden pink clouds told me the sun was on his way. Summer is over, autumn, too, and the last rose has been picked; but our brave robin sang as though his heart would burst for joy; there were friendly sounds of barking dogs, and cackling geese and hens, and it seemed as though the nightmare War could n't be true. Yet it has never been truer than now; V.I.H. is in the midst of its biggest push, and we could fill as many beds again, if we had them. One of the new men has been in Blighty twice before; once with dysentery from Mesopotamia,

once badly wounded from France, and now he's back with trench-fever. He says cheerfully that forty-eight hours in a shell-hole with water up to his neck, did it. However, he stuck to his Lewis gun as long as he could, and only turned over his responsibility for part of Fritz's line when he had to. Fuller, a silent soul from the West Ridings, is back wounded for the fourth time; he got badly smashed in Bourlon Wood, but is coming strong. Whiting is up with marvellously bandaged head. He's a good sort, and trots around with tea and cocoa at meal times with great glee. The Canadians and Australians have lately been voting. We have three of the former and two of the latter; for each group there came to the hospital an officer and orderly bearing the necessary papers, and the voting was accomplished. Think of the enormous amount of detail involved, since every Colonial in field or hospital must vote.

The papers here give one a splendid idea of what America is doing, — her efforts and accomplishment. I hope everyone at home realizes what we are up against. Perhaps, if the darkest hour comes before the dawn, the end is very near, for the hour is surely dark. I hear there are more Americans than ever in Tours, and a large number in France, but not enough. We need to put in every bit of ourselves, or the end will be wrong.

Thank you so much for sending me Dr. Joslin's article on Sugar. It's splendid, is n't it? I'm lending it to a lot of people here. My passport extension expired December 15, so a second renewal was necessary. I had to have an affidavit from the head of the hospital as to the value and necessity of my services, to secure it! Mrs. Frost is still away, so Miss Vernon wrote to the Consulate for me — such a nice letter. I must leave you now, and carry over the big tureen of soup for the troops' supper;

if you could look in on the scene, how strange it would seem to you, and yet to me it has become so natural.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

All the frost has gone, and a soft spring-like rain is falling, but we are promised clear and colder weather to-morrow. We have been unusually busy to-day: this morning Olive Frost and I carbolized fourteen beds, beat twenty-eight mattresses, two for each bed, and bolsters, pillows and blankets to match. Besides, there were fourteen lockers to be scrubbed and made ready for the new men, and of course "business as usual." The men were in a great state of excitement, putting up holly and greens, and every sort of Christmas decoration; Vernon Ward boasts a magnificent Father Christmas enthroned over the clock, and Thornycroft is resplendent with a huge panel of turkey red, bearing the legend "Merry Christmas to the Staff" in white letters, and beneath, all the flags of the Allies, the Union Jack at the top, and the Stars and Stripes in the middle. Over the big door into the hall again hangs the Stars and Stripes in my honor. You can imagine that it is hard to carry on routine with all this "doing." I can't think it is Christmas without you; the work and bustle are welcome, since they keep one from thinking. I shall be here almost until I sail. Out of the hospital into the ship, as it were; I simply can't grasp it now the time has come. I want to go, but it's dreadful to leave England. I hope you are not too lonely to-night. . . . Poor old world,—the fourth Christmas of the war! I had a Christmas letter from Courtenay Thorpe this afternoon; he sends you his love. He has n't sent any cards, for it has been hard to keep things going while air-raids complicate life.

December 26.

When I came down to breakfast yesterday, I found mysterious packages at my place, for Sydney and Mrs. Williamson had played Santa Claus! Mary met me with hers as I walked into the hospital courtyard, and had your cable in her other hand. It was such a joy to begin the day with you; above all, the little word "Well" was so precious to me. It was a lovely day, frosty and bright, though it could not seem a real Christmas to me without you. The troops had tearing fun all day. A few were sad; Mason, a big Australian, who lost his brother just a year ago, and the Canadians were homesick. But we all threw ourselves into the fun, heart and soul, knowing that would be the best solution of our day, and Matron said it was the best of the war Christmases. Fortunately, it was a good day for all the bed-patients, except Bedworth, whose stump is behaving badly. He suffered all day, but made light of it, so as not to spoil the fun. The Night-Staff had had such a time filling the men's stockings; they would hardly go to sleep all night, waiting to see the stockings hung on the beds. Of course eventually they dropped off, and when morning came, there was all the fun of the surprise. The men had a wonderful dinner; turkey, a marvellous plum-pudding of a pre-war nature, given by the Vernons, and oranges from Mary and her aunt. The men in the wards, who could not get across to the dining-room, arranged their dinners on the bed-tables with the bed-patients, and there was keen rivalry with the decorations. We all thought Evans's table was the prize-winner. The Night-Staff got up and joined us for dinner at two; we also had turkey, but only *war* plum-pudding! For tea, three long tables were spread down Thornycroft (half the beds were moved into Vernon), and patients and Staff had tea together. It was great fun;

there were crackers to pull, mottoes to read, absurd paper caps to put on, musical toys of all sorts, and endless merriment. Altogether, an unforgettable, delightful and picturesque moment. The troops loved it all, but no more than we did. After that, evening routine was gone through, all preparations made for supper, and then came the concert, which ended with a whistling contest, too funny for words. Sydney and I and seven men entered; each of us tried to whistle "Home, Sweet Home" without breaking down. Harris won; I did n't get very far, for I was between Lightbody and McLenahan, neither of whom could keep his face straight at any moment of the contest. Colonel Fairrie was judge; he suggested another round, with "Rule Britannia." I was allowed to try "The Star-Spangled Banner," and was getting on well, but the constant giggling on either side of me broke me up before the end. The rest of the concert was very nice; I did the playing for everyone; Mason sang "A Perfect Day," Olive and I undertook a charming duet from "Arlette," and we all sang "Annie Laurie." After the concert, part of the Staff and some patients did an amusing sketch, and we danced. Then supper, and so the day ended. We got the troops settled for the night by ten; they were tired but happy, for most of them had not spent Christmas in England since 1913.

December 28.

We had the Christmas tree yesterday; it was a beauty, and loaded with presents for every patient and nurse. It was all fun, but the presentation to Colonel Vernon* was the great moment of the afternoon. The men had

* Colonel Vernon died on January 24, 1919, after a short illness, deeply mourned and greatly regretted by all who knew him; an irreparable loss to his county and his country.

got together and bought him a silver match-box, for which they had evolved such a delightful inscription. He was greatly touched, and made a beautiful speech in acknowledgment. He does so much for the men; it is pleasant to know how thoroughly they appreciate it. We still have a party ahead, for Dr. Lees is giving a whist drive to-night. Truly, Christmas Week has been giddy.

January 2, 1918.

Many, many thanks for both your letters, which came this morning. I'm sorry to hear of the intense cold you are having; it must greatly complicate life. Here the days are lovely, bright and sunny, only a little frosty, but it has been very cold at the front and as far south as Bordeaux. . . . I had such a good time Saturday; Matron took me to see "Aladdin," a Christmas pantomime, and we had tea together afterwards. That seems a long time ago, for we are in the midst of a very busy week. Fourteen cases came in at 3 A.M. Monday, — eight stretcher and six sitting. Three of them are bad medical cases, — acute nephritis and gastritis, — so special diets are on again. Among the wounded there is a young Australian named Beckett, who comes from No. 13 General, Alice Lake's hospital; she is Night Supervisor now, and he remembers her. The new men look so smart, dressed in the splendid warm shirts and pajamas that Leslie's wonderful Red Cross box yielded; bless her! We have been one short on the Staff, but Olive is taking hold well and is a great help. Staff-Nurse and I had a *fierce* day Sunday! Sister was off for the day. Whiting's head was bad again, and had to be dressed twice, and there was service to play for; no off duty all day for us. However, next day more than made up for it, for Mary came to fetch me with a donkey-cart, and we went home

to Crabwall for tea, and had a lovely afternoon. I came back to find a wonderful post. . . . And there was a beautiful moon, so I was very happy. Miss Vernon is coming down for a sing-song this week, which will be jolly. This is a scribble, but I want it to get off in case a boat leaves before me. It's going to be perfect to be with you again, yet it's hard to leave. If only I had Aladdin's lamp, I'd wish you both over here.

Besides the following letters, the V.A.D. has a silver bowl and ink-stand, beautifully inscribed, from the Commandant, Assistant Commandant and Quartermaster, and the Staff, respectively, to go with her down the years, visible tokens of happy months of work and comradeship.

Extract from letter from Lieut. Raffy, March 15, 1918

"*Vous nous avez donné enfin, en plus de votre dévouement sans borne, la mesure de tout ce qu'avait de généreux et noble, le beau geste de l'Amérique en faveur de la France. Vous avez fait partie de cette splendide avant-garde qui, ne se lassant jamais de tenir au courant la grande sœur américaine des efforts désespérés que faisait la France pour ne pas être germanisée, a déterminé votre gouvernement à déclarer la guerre aux Boches.*"

February 2, 1918.

I am writing you these few lines on behalf of the patients of the Vernon Institute Hospital who all still think of you and talk of you daily. We are very sorry that you had to leave us because I am sure you were loved by everyone, also you were a great help to every-

one and always greeted everyone with a smiling face, which is a great thing for one when in pain. I am sure we were all pleased when we read your cablegram saying you had landed safely on the other side, as there are so many dangers on the water at the present time. Of course many of the patients whom you knew have left us, but when they went away they all wished to be remembered to you when we wrote. We are pleased to inform you that Private King of the Canadian Black Watch got his discharge from the Army, so he will be finished with the horrors of war. We only hope it will not be long before we are all finished with it. Well, I will now close, wishing you the very best of luck from all the boys.

Yours very sincerely,

T. G. ELLIOTT, *Sergeant.*